



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Louis J. Molepske, Jr.
71ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony of
Rep. Louis J. Molepske, Jr., 71st Assembly District
Before the Assembly Committee on Public Safety
23 March, 2010
On
AB 841

Chairman and Members of the Committee I appreciate this opportunity to testify today on AB 841.

This legislation was requested by the Snowmobile Recreational Council after a series of meetings with stakeholder groups within the Council, including the Wisconsin ATV Association and Safe & Sober Snowmobilers United. They also will be testifying in support of the bill today.

While there has been much discussion and important action regarding motor vehicle drunk driving reform, Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) statutes for recreational vehicles are also in need of updating. This bill seeks to clean up what is currently a patchwork of laws applying to snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, and motorboat operation, making them more consistent and unified with motor vehicle OWI statutes.

This bill makes uniform the penalties for OWI's across classes of recreational vehicles -- boats snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles. Current law separates OWI convictions based on the class of recreational vehicle. Under this bill, beginning in the next fiscal year, an OWI conviction while operating *any* recreational vehicle will count towards the total number of recreation vehicle OWIs to be considered by the courts during sentencing.

In addition, this bill raises the portion of out-of-state snowmobile permit fees that will be allocated to develop and maintain snowmobile trails. This will encourage increased trail use and promote tourism and job creation across the state.

Not only is it important to train and educate recreational vehicle users in the safe operation of the equipment, it is equally as important, as you will hear from others, to organize law enforcement strategies to correct what appears to be an increasing problem of operating recreational vehicles while intoxicated.

Attached is a summary of the all of the points of the bill. I hope you will agree that AB 841 is good public policy and recommend it for passage.

PENALTIES:

Absolute Sobriety Violation - \$50 forfeiture.

Operate a Rec. Vehicle with Suspended Rec. Vehicle Operating Privileges- \$50 - \$250 forfeiture. 0-6 month suspension of rec. vehicle privileges.

Operate a Rec. Vehicle with Suspended Motor Vehicle Privileges (OWI Related) - \$150 - \$300 forfeiture, 0-6 month suspension of rec. vehicle privileges.

OWI – 1st - \$400-\$550 forfeiture. Suspend all rec. vehicle operating privileges for 12-16 months. Mandatory completion of a safety education course.

OWI – 2nd - \$300-\$1100 fine. Five days – 1 year in jail. Suspend all rec. vehicle operating privileges for 12-16 months. Revoke motor vehicle privileges for 6-12 months. Mandatory safety education.

OWI – 3rd - \$600-\$2000 fine. 30 days – 1 year in jail. Suspend all rec. vehicle operating privileges for 12-16 months. Revoke motor vehicle privileges for 6-12 months. Mandatory safety education.

OWI – 4th - \$600-\$2000 fine. 60 days – 1 year in jail. Suspend all rec. vehicle operating privileges for 12-16 months. Revoke motor vehicle privileges for 6-12 months. Mandatory safety education.

OWI – 5th and additional - \$600 - \$2000 fine. 6 months – 1 year in jail. Suspend all rec. vehicle operating privileges for 12-16 months. Revoke motor vehicle privileges for 6-12 months. Mandatory safety education.

Penalty Enhancer – OWI with Passenger under 16 – all forfeitures, fines and jail time is doubled.

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources testimony on
AB 841
regarding
Intoxicated Operation of ATVs, snowmobiles and motorboats
Assembly Public Safety Committee
March 23rd at 1:00 PM
North Hearing Room – 2nd Floor North
Position of Department of Natural Resources: In Favor
Testimony by: Gary Eddy, DNR ATV and Snowmobile Administrator**

The Department is appearing in support of AB 841 which would increase the penalties for persons operating an ATV, boat or snowmobile while intoxicated. This bill makes all the recreational vehicle OWI penalties the same, suspends a person's privilege to operate a recreational vehicle and revokes a person's motor vehicle license in the event they choose to operate intoxicated twice within a five year period. Furthermore, it restricts a person that has already lost their driver's license by driving drunk, from operating any recreational vehicle.

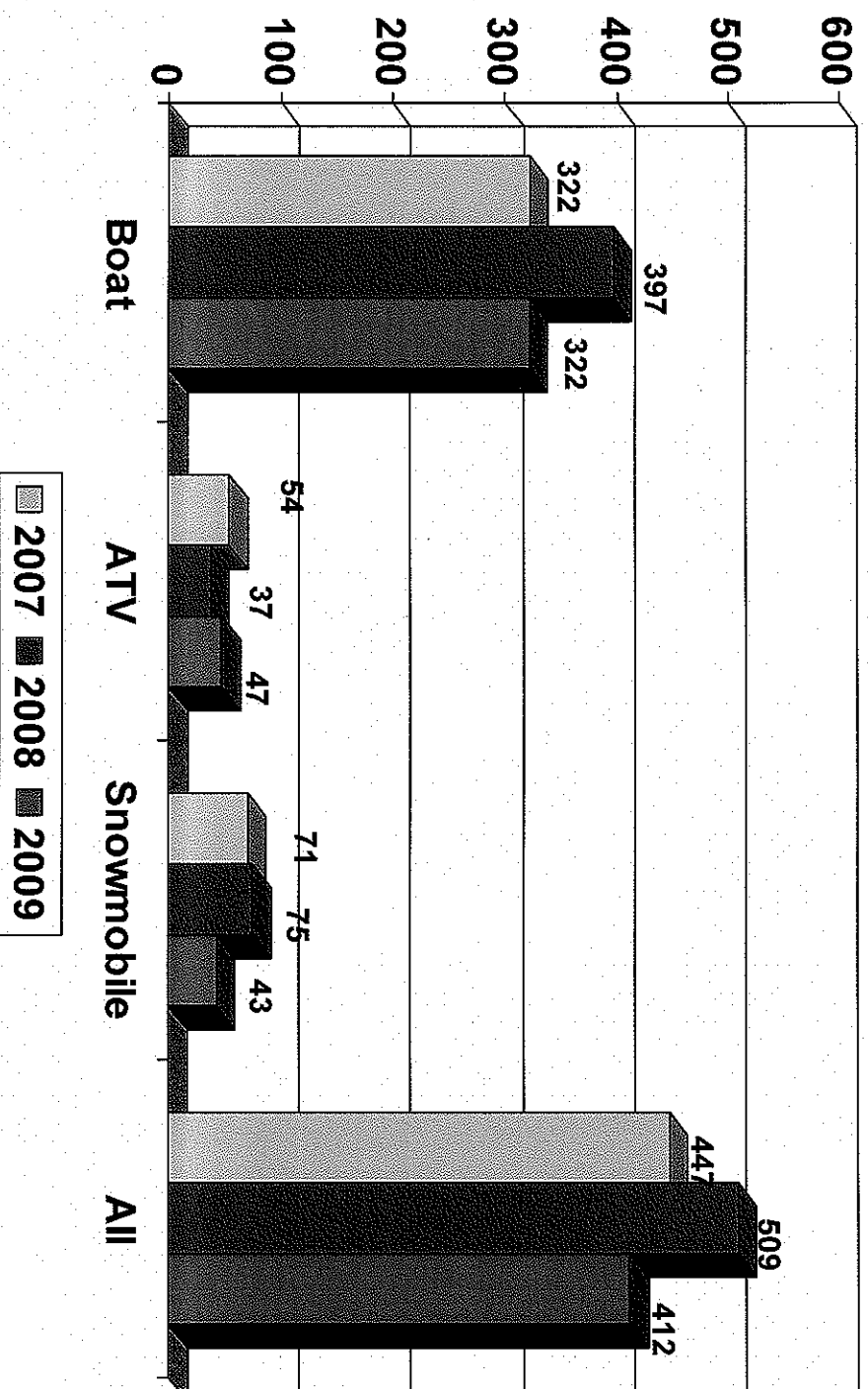
This bill is the result of a joint effort by ATV, boating and snowmobile organizations who recognized that our current OWI penalties were weak and worked hard to come up with a set of common sense recommendations that would greatly strengthen those laws. I commend all the citizens involved with that effort.

This bill has a potential to decrease the number of ATV, boating and snowmobile fatalities in Wisconsin by creating a necessary deterrent that is lacking with our current OWI laws. Millions of visitors and residents recreate on Wisconsin's waterways and trails; careless people that choose to operate while intoxicated, put all these people at risk. Unfortunately some of these people succeed at killing themselves and others each year.

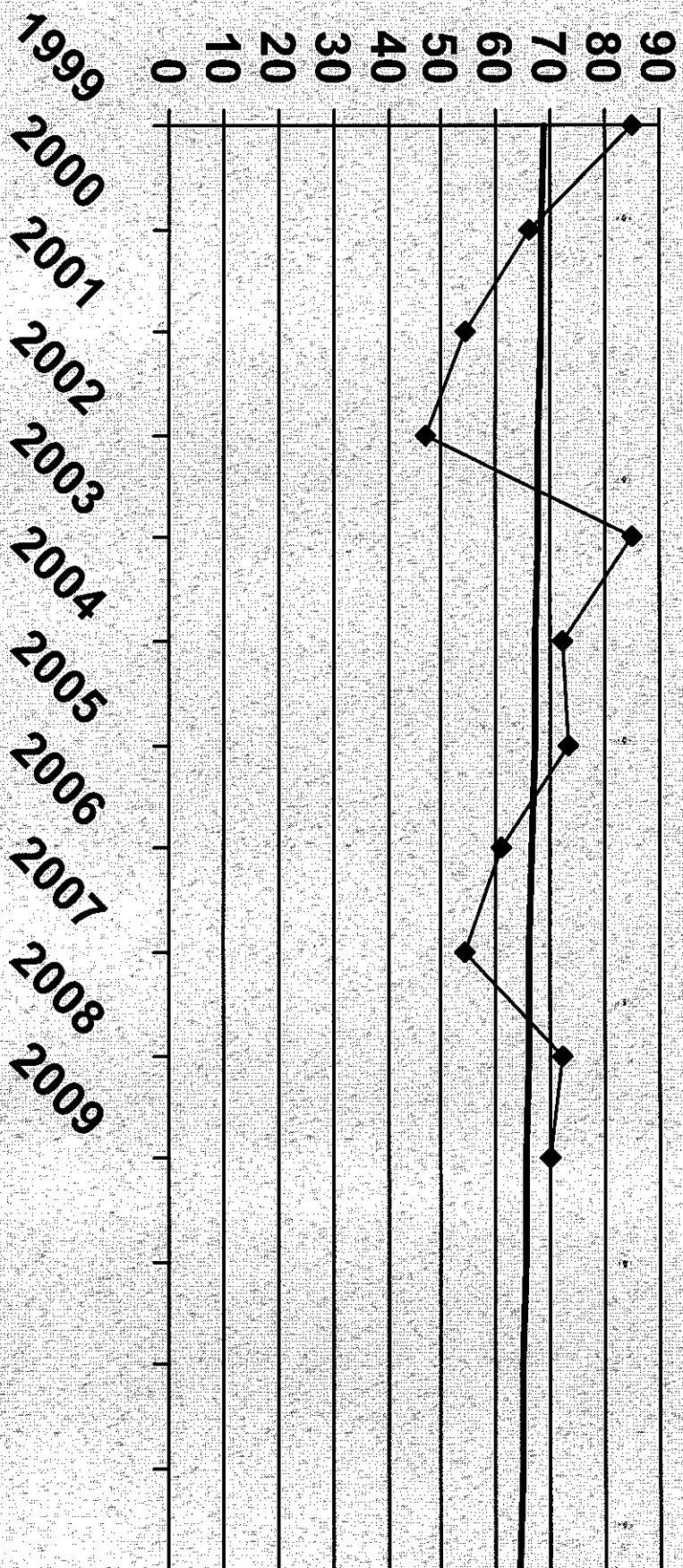
This bill seeks to provide a safer environment on our trails and waterways by creating penalties that finally have some teeth. On behalf of the many families in Wisconsin that have senselessly lost a loved one due to intoxicated operation of a recreational vehicle,

I urge you to pass this bill.

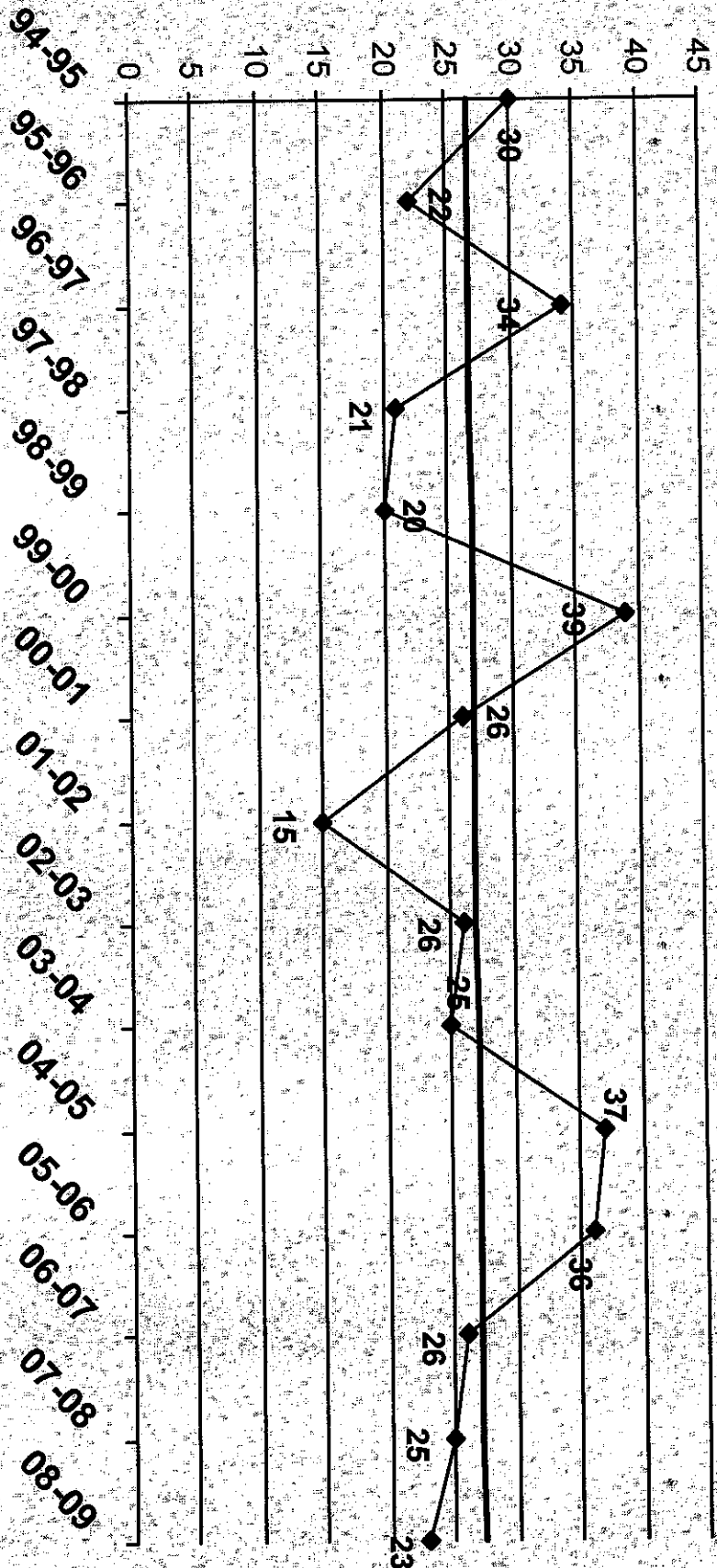
Annual Boat, ATV and Snowmobile Citations for OWI



Percentage of Alcohol Involved Snowmobile Fatalities

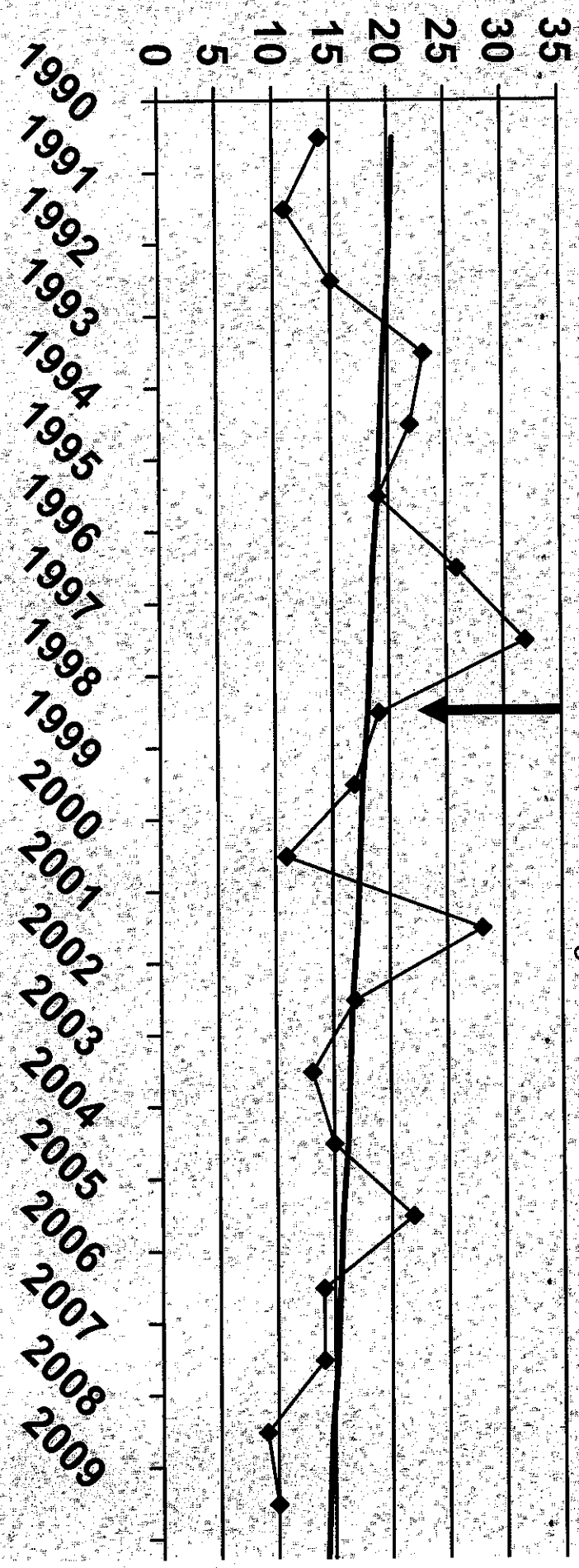


History of Wisconsin Snowmobile Fatalities



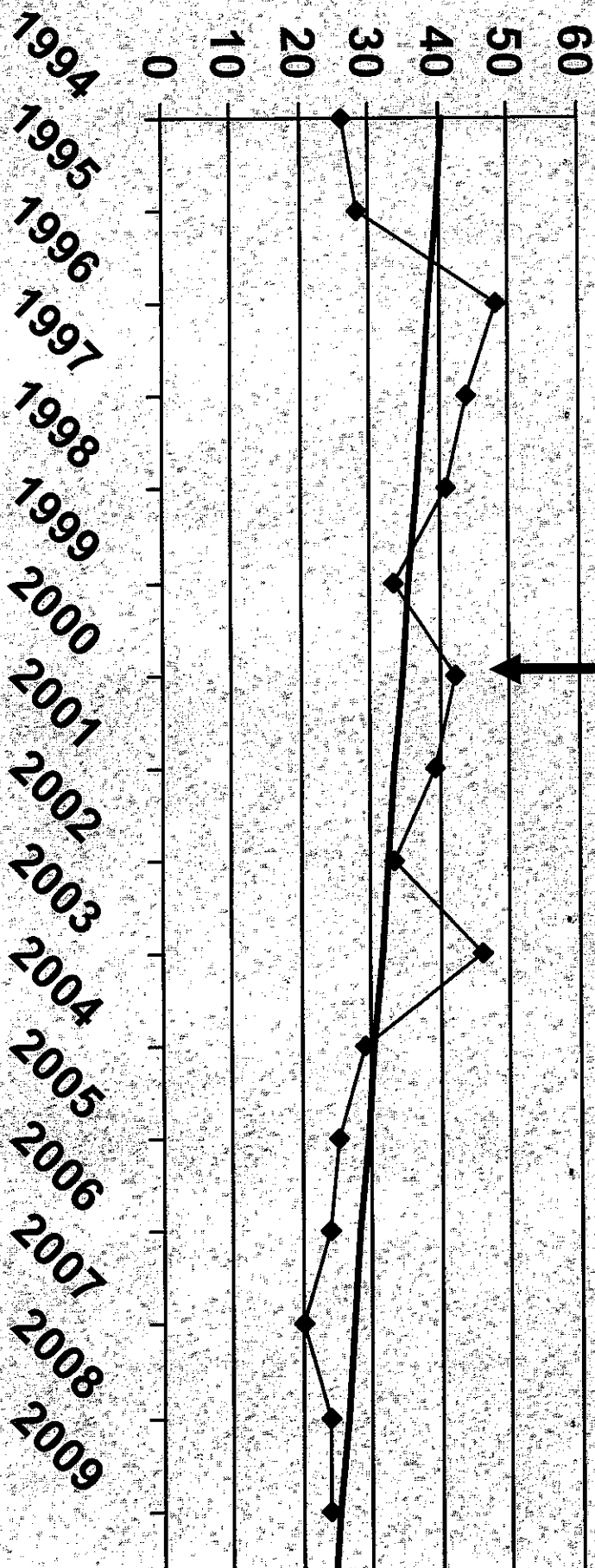
Minnesota Snowmobile Fatalities

NEW LAW: OWI Recorded on
Person's Driving Record

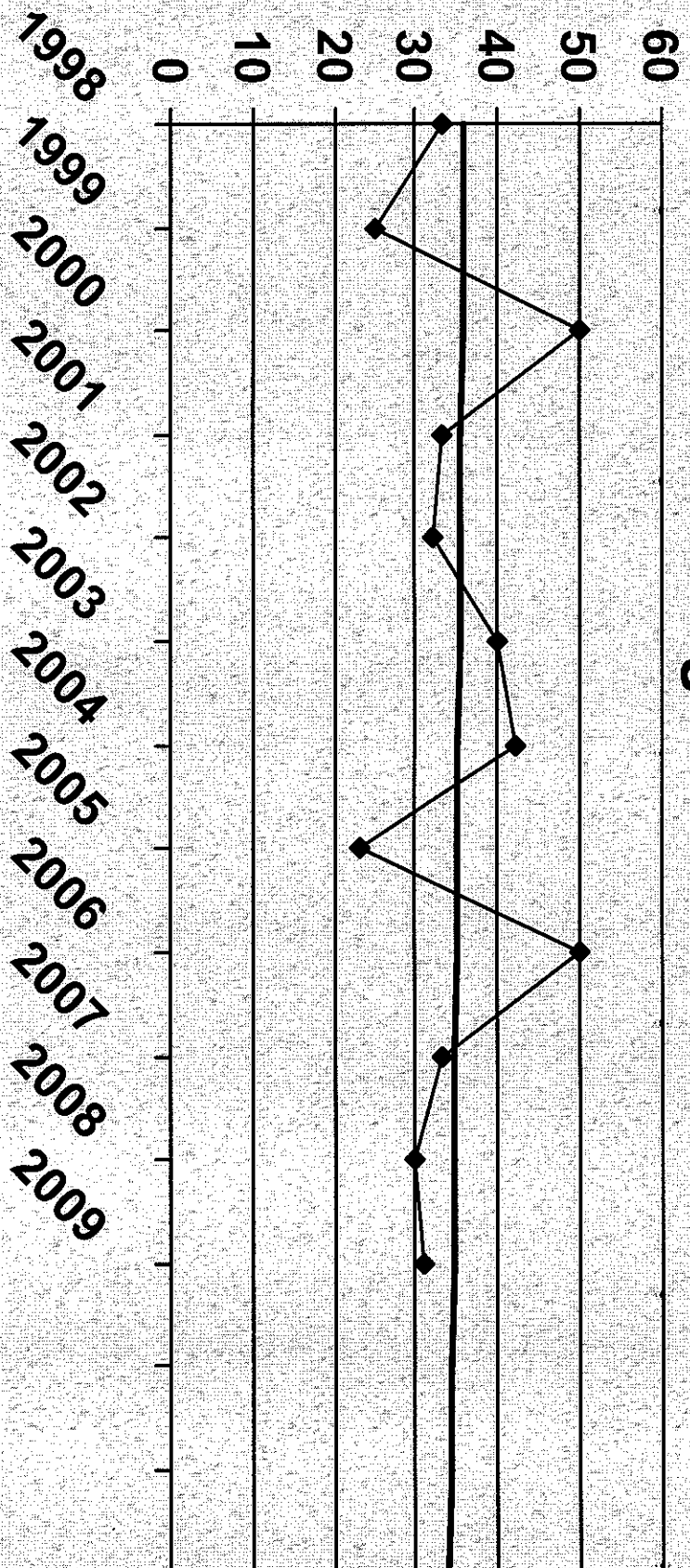


Michigan Snowmobile Fatalities

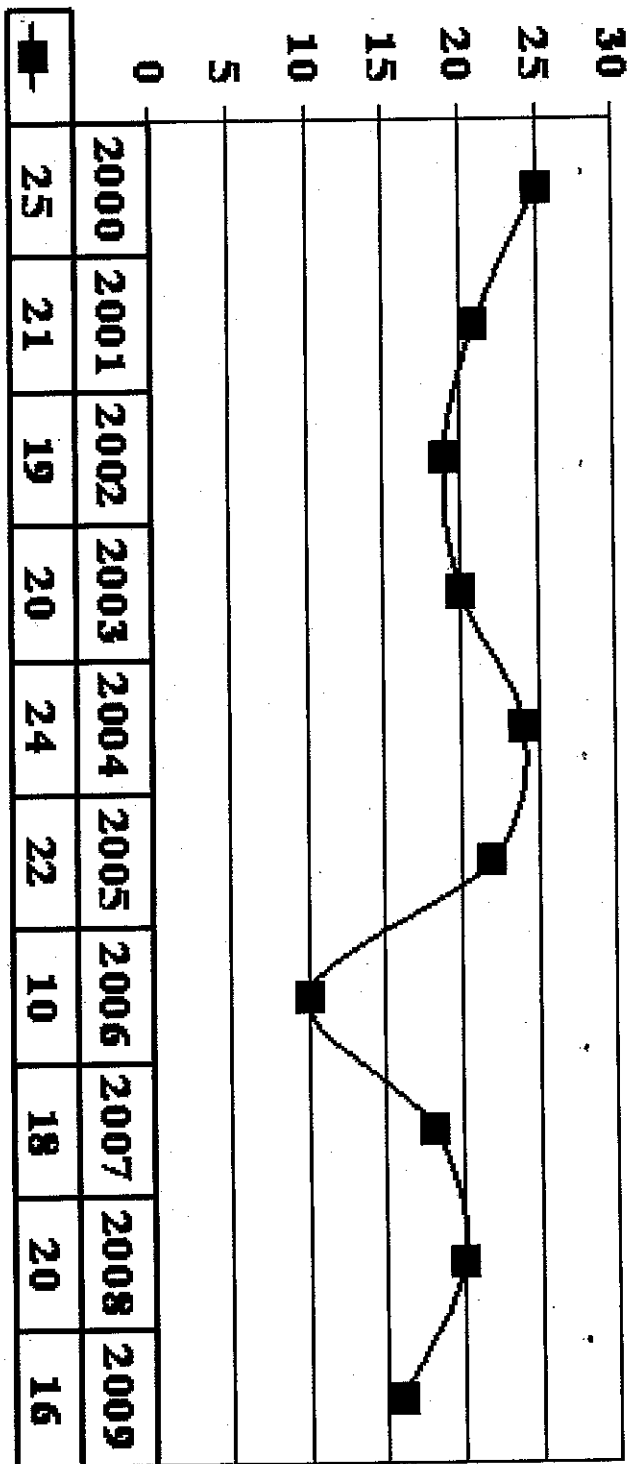
NEW LAW: Points Assessed
Against Driver's License for OWI



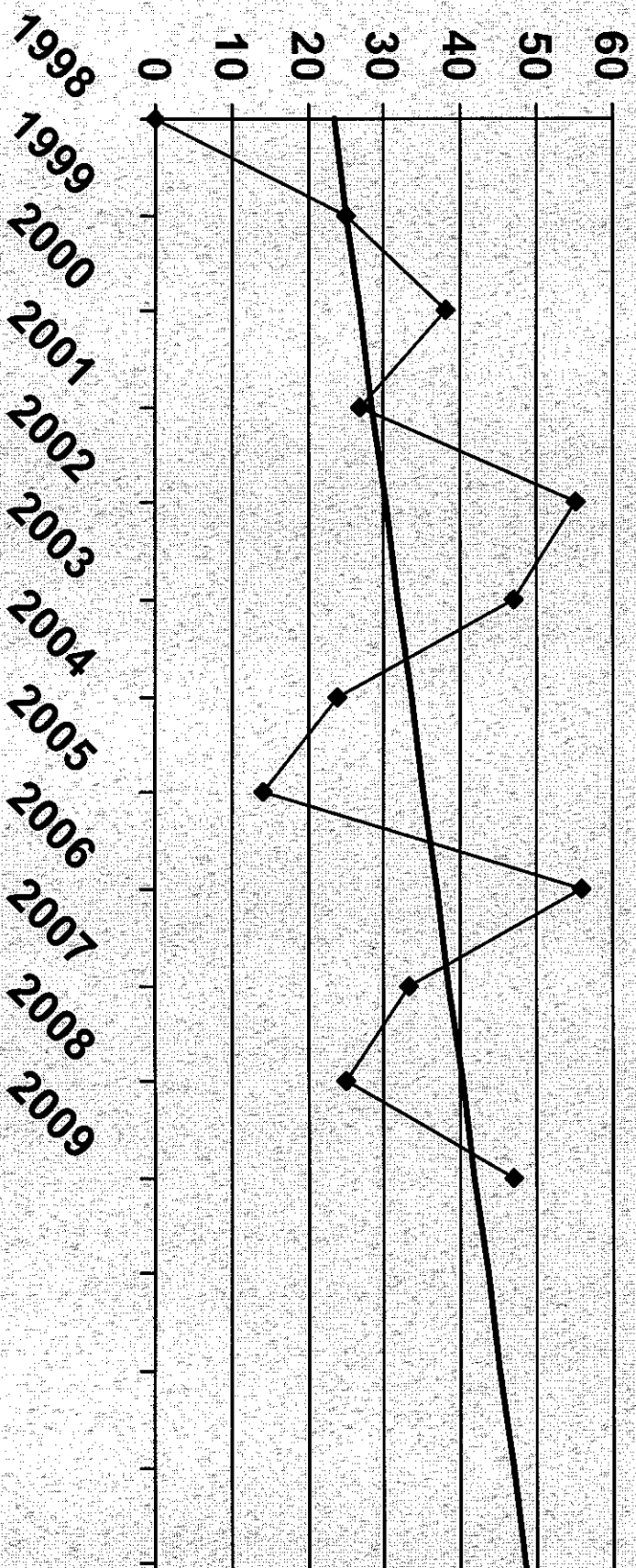
Percentage of Alcohol Involved Boating Fatalities



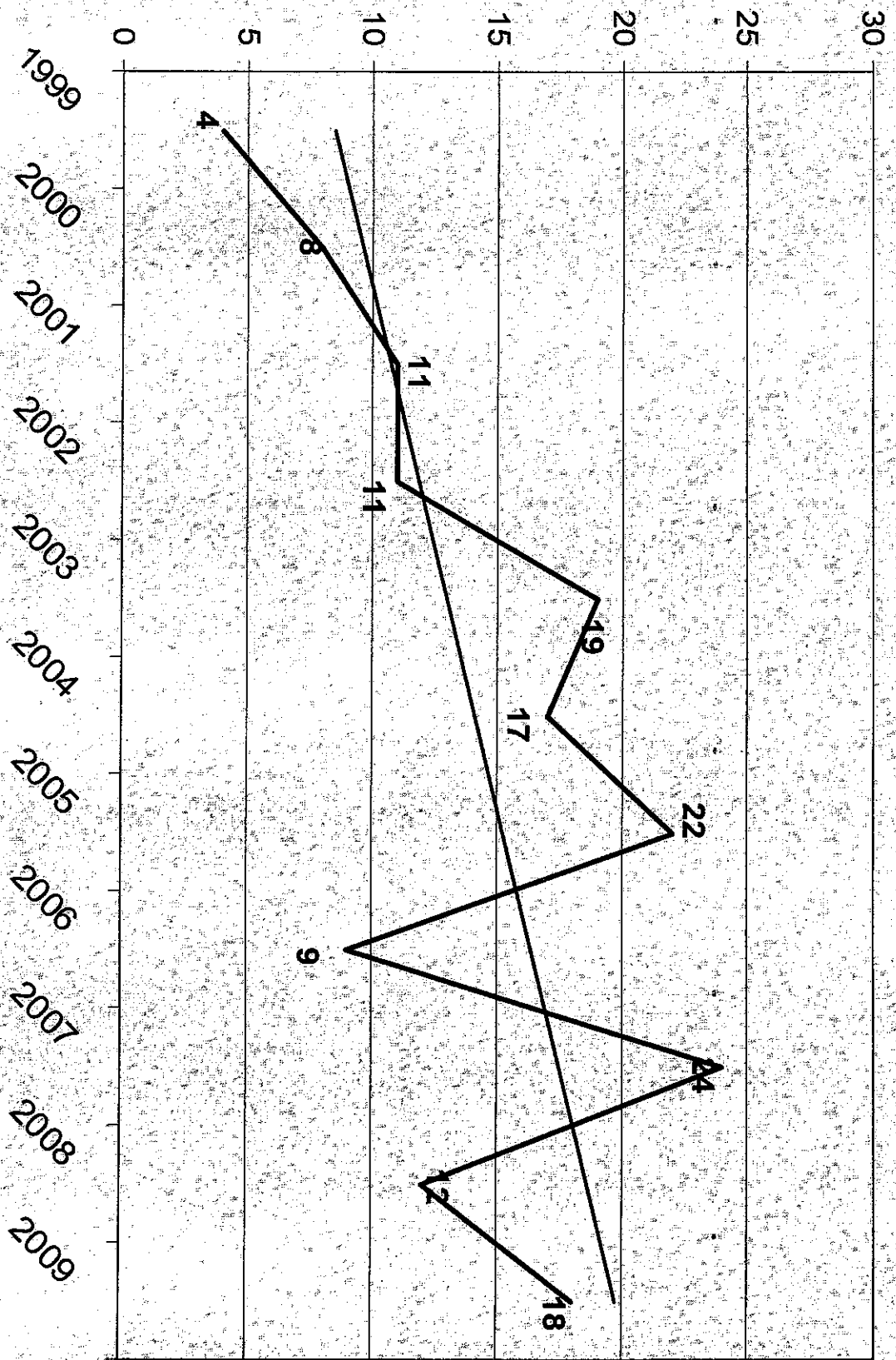
Wisconsin Boating Fatalities



Percentage of Alcohol Involved ATV Fatalities



History of ATV Fatalities



SNOWMOBILE RECREATION COUNCIL AGENDA & RECORD**July 20, 2009**

Portage County Annex, Stevens Point, WI

Presenter/ Time	Agenda Item	Key Points	Outcomes, Next Steps, Assignments
8:30 AM	1. Call to Order	Members Present: Tom Chwala, Sam Landes, Donna White, Mike Willman, Karen Carlson, Jerry Green, Larry Erickson, Andy Malecki, Mike Cerny, Jon Schweitzer, Tom Thornton, Rick Steimel, Bev Dittmar, and Bob Lang Others Present: Diane Conklin, Gary Eddy, Mary Rose Teves, JD Smith, Ed Slaminski, Gary Hanson, Tim Panzer, Lavane Hessler, and Pat Zatopa – DNR, members of the public and media.	
	2. Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meeting		Motion by Donna White, second by Jerry Green to accept the minutes. Motion Carried.
	3. Comments	Mike Cerny – attended one more multi-group meeting to discuss the issue of OWI-DL tie in. Also, talked to several Senators/Representatives regarding a variety of snowmobile issues. Bev Dittmar – we are in a situation this year where we have many more projects than we have funds. Therefore, we want everyone to understand that we have to make some very difficult decisions.	
	4. Citizen Participation	AWSC – Morris Nelson <ul style="list-style-type: none">Drafting legislation that would create a one-time registration and then have a trail pass. It would be a two-tier system; \$35 non-AWSC member or \$15 AWSC member rate. The calculation for gas tax would be based on the trail pass sticker	

		<p>numbers instead of the registration numbers. AWSC would be a sole source vendor for the member trail passes. Non-member passes would be sold at ALIS vendors or other non-ALIS vendors.</p> <p>Other items that AWSC is working on is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunset 55 night time speed limit • Personal property tax exemption for clubs • Increase state law enforcement to \$150,000 total out of the SEG account plus \$40,000 into alcohol awareness, and alternative transportation program • \$30,000 into state trails • absolute sobriety for under age 18 drivers • double penalties for having a minor riding with you (16 and under) • anticipated increase of \$2 million into the Snowmobile SEG fund • transfer balance of non-resident increase into supplemental <p>Charles Griffith, Safe & Sober WI Snowmobilers United</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has pledged his full support for the OWI-DL tie in. <p>Ralph Sitzberger, Vilas Co Board of Supervisors, snowmobiler (Frosty Snowmobiler Club)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is asking for the Council to consider funding a short segment of club trail in Land o' Lakes WI, Patrick Schmutzer – represent Safe & Sober WI Snowmobilers United. • Was hit by a snowmobiler that was an OWI. • Fully supports the OWI-DL tie in. 	
--	--	---	--

		Bill Pfaff – requests support for the AWSCL legislation	
5. Reports		<p>State Trails – Tom Thornton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council approved a letter to be sent supporting the OWI-DL tie in as proposed by the Snowmobile Council. <p>Department RTA Ranking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We haven't received the final numbers for this year's funding. • While we have reviewed the applications, we have not finalized the list yet and won't until we know how much money we have. <p>Law Enforcement – Gary Eddy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Special team has been reactivated. • The Special team has been reactivated. • Night time speed limit expiring • Snowmobile decals – new ones coming • The decals are "running" off if a cleaning fluid or gas gets spilled on them. Clear tape over the top will prevent this. However, if this happens, the Department will replace one time only for no charge. After that, it will be at the owner's expense. We are working on new stickers to prevent this. • Snowmobile Safety Education Course – had an instructor (Bob Blaskowski) provided a recommendation for a stickers which he had been providing on his own. DNR will be providing this now for graduates. (See attached sample – Attachment 2.) 	
Bev Dittmar	6. Reports of Standing	Finance	Motion by Sam Landes, second by Tom

Rick Steimel	Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bev Dittmar provided a summary of the Estimated Available Funds. • Very short of funds • No Motions <p>Law Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatality summary was presented • OWI-DL issue was discussed. There were three (3) meetings that occurred throughout the year with other user groups (ATV, DOT, Boating, State Trails, etc.) The outcome was that all others supported the OWI-DL tie in. The Committee voted to "stay the course" with this discussion. See attached points (Attachment 1) that were agreed upon at the multi-group meetings. • Next meeting agenda items will include the 55 night time speed limit be permanent. <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge Guidelines book – this is still pending the language changes in NR 50/64. • Life expectancy of structures – Andy checked with bridge manufacturers. The current life expectancy is 10 yrs. The manufacturers indicated that steel bridges should have a life expectancy of approximately 45 yrs., Oil treated type lumber recommendation approximately 40 yrs. Water treated Wood, approximately 25 yrs, (See attached summary of bridge contacts. (Attachment #3) • Entering discussion regarding federal bridge specs. • Hubbleton Bridge -- moving along! • DOT coordination with our trails when 	Thornton to approve reports as presented. <u>Motion carried.</u>
Andy Malecki			

			<p>Bob Lang Y Rick Steimel Y</p> <p>Tom Thornton Y Jon Schweitzer Y</p> <p>Bev Dittmar Y Andy Malecki Y</p> <p>Larry Erickson N Jerry Green Y</p> <p>Karen Carlson Y Mike Willman Y</p> <p>Donna White N Sam Landes N</p> <p>Tom Chwala Y</p> <p>10 Yes 3 No. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Andy Malecki to classify Kubota M126X Power Crawler as a Class A. Second by Bev Dittmar. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Andy Malecki, second by Bev Dittmar to approve the Equipment rates for the upcoming season to be the same as the last year. <u>Motion carried.</u></p>
	Nomination	<p>A call for nominations for Chair was requested. Andy Malecki nominated Mike Cerny as Chair. Jerry Green seconded. Nominations were called for three (3) times.</p> <p>A call for nominations for Vice Chair were requested. Donna White nominated Bev Dittmar for Vice Chair. Andy Malecki seconded. Nominations were called for three (3) times.</p> <p>All projects were reviewed as per statute and code. Funding was awarded in priority order. Juneau County submitted a variance request to submit an application after the April 15, deadline.</p>	<p>Motion by Tom Thornton, second by Donna White to close nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Mike Cerny. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Jerry Green, second by Donna White to close nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Bev Dittmar. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Donna White, second by Sam Landes to approve the Juneau County request for a variance. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Bev Dittmar, second by Tom</p>
	8. Trail Matters	Bridge Rehabilitation	

Jerry Green		<p>construction impacts it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong concern regarding the Cheese Country Trail and the railroad coming back and we would lose this trail or a segment of it. • Consider outside engineering to be an eligible expense for funding. • Equipment rates discussion • Bridge Application forms (want some changes to make things more clear and avoid the usual questions for future). • Previewed the Bridge applications in anticipation of questions. Questions were provided to the regional CSS's to take back to the counties and get responses. This was done to attempt to have as much information as possible when making our funding decisions. <p>Tourism – Teleconference on July 7. Placemats were discussed. We are now looking at where we can seek funding to do something similar. We have contacted sponsors but none would commit without pricing. The anticipated quantity is 2 million. We are searching for previous costs, how we funded them, and what we can do now.</p>	
	7.Action Arising from Reports	Law Enforcement Committee – OWI/DL Tie in – per the attached handout (Attachment #1).	Motion by Tom Thornton, second by Mike Willman that the SRC go on record as supporting the proposed language and send a letter to the Governor and Secretary Frank requesting that they seek legislation to accomplish these goals. Roll Call vote was requested by Tom Thornton.

		<p>Thornton to approve bridge rehabilitation as noted below. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p> Sheboygan Co - \$16,350 Langlade Co - 26,700 Florence Co - \$60,500 Taylor Co - \$8,600 Vilas Co - \$7,000 Vilas Co - \$5,000 Vilas Co - \$3,800 Vilas Co - \$70,800 Lincoln Co - \$1,529 Polk Co - \$8,400 Trempealeau Co - \$17,484 Chippewa Co - \$44,380 LaCrosse Co - \$4,000 LaCrosse Co - \$43,375 Monroe Co - \$23,625 Clark Co - \$41,250 Juneau Co - \$68,450 Wood Co - \$52,000 Portage Co - \$18,100 Portage Co - \$20,600 Portage Co - \$24,500 Fond du Lac Co - \$17,740 Green Lake Co - \$5,575 Green Lake Co - \$27,800 Manitowoc Co - \$108,750 Manitowoc Co - \$108,750 Manitowoc Co - \$2,500 Marquette Co - \$46,670 Oconto Co - \$30,000 Shawano Co - \$11,000 </p>
--	--	---

		<p>Shawano Co - \$11,000 Outagamie Co - \$14,114 Waupaca Co - \$51,040 Waushara Co - \$21,163 Dodge Co - \$15,700 Dane Co - \$35,050 Green Co - \$19,028 Jefferson Co - \$3,826 Dodge Co - \$7,000 Juneau Co - \$77,200 For a total of \$1,180,349.</p>
	New Bridge Amendments	<p>Motion by Andy Malecki, second by Bev Dittmar to fund the Hubbleton New Bridge amendment at \$22,900. <u>Motion carried.</u></p>
	Mandatory Trail Relocations	<p>Motion by Sam Landes, second by Tom Chwala to fund the Douglas County New Bridge amendment for \$6,572.00. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Bev Dittmar, second by Tom Chwala to approve the following Mandatory Trail Relocations: Langlade \$4,448, Rusk \$64,220, and Douglas \$2,972. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Mike Willman, second by Donna White to approve the Green Lake Mandatory trail relocation for \$5,575.00. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Andy Malecki, second by</p>

			<p>Tom Chwala to approve the additional Mandatory trail relocations as follows: Iron County , \$11,772., Vilas at \$1550. Vilas at \$6,600, Forest at \$1,275, Rusk at \$5,034, and Washburn at \$2,686.</p>
	9. Member Items	<p>Sam – trail issues Andy – council should support AWSC's proposal Tom Thornton – Bayfield County won their Federally Granted Railroad lawsuit. However, it could be appealed. We won't know for sure until July 30th. Rick Steimel – OWI – DL has seen 9 years in the making. Mike Cerny – Suggest that we drop the Tourism committee.</p> <p>Suggest we develop a criteria for rating bridge rehab projects. Look at possibly changing some of the criteria for projects in code (23.09 (16)).</p>	<p>Motion by Bev Dittmar, second by Donna White to drop the Tourism Committee, and appoint one person to represent Tourism. <u>Motion carried.</u></p> <p>Motion by Bev Dittmar, second by Bob Lang to develop an ad Hoc committee to develop a point system, changes to 23.09, application review. Make-up of committee should be ATV, county coordinator, CSS, SRC council member(s) and AWSC. <u>Motion carried.</u></p>
	10. Next Meeting		To be determined
3:30 PM	11. Adjournment		Motion by Tom Chwala, second by Bob Lang, to adjourn. <u>Motion carried.</u>

Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council
Law Enforcement Committee Meeting
July 19, 2009
Stevens Point, WI

RECOMMENDATIONS FORWARDED FROM AD HOC COMMITTEE

1. TIE-IN ALL REC. VEHICLE OWIs TOGETHER

- Suspension of ALL Recreational Vehicle Operating Privileges

2. UNIFY ALL PENALTIES FOR OWI TO THE HIGHEST CURRENT PENALTIES

First Offense

OWI

OWI - with a passenger <16

Operate With Prohibited Alcohol

Concentration (.08 - or more)

with passenger <16

Refuse to Submit to Evidentiary

Testing

with passenger <16

2nd Offense OWI (within 5 yrs)

\$300 - \$1,000 Fine and 5 days - 1 year

3rd Offense OWI (within 5 yrs)

\$600 - \$2,000 Fine and 1 mo.s - 1 year

4th Offense OWI (within 5 yrs)

\$600 - \$2,000 Fine and 2 mo.s - 1 year

5th Offense OWI (within 5 yrs)

\$600 - \$2,000 Fine and 2 mo.s - 1 year

Underage Passenger -- all fines and jail time doubles
Absolute Sobriety -- under age 21
Mandatory Alcohol Assessment
Mandatory Safety Education Course

3. TIE-IN SECOND OFFENSE TO THE DRIVER'S LICENSE

Second recreational vehicle OWI violation within a five year period is counted as second offense and will result in a driver's license suspension.

In addition, if the person's driver's license is currently suspended or revoked for motor vehicle OWI or related offense, then it will be counted as a second offense on a recreational vehicle.

Note: If a person has a prior arrest for OWI in a motor vehicle, but their driver's license IS NOT currently suspended or revoked, it will only be counted as a first offense in a recreational vehicle.

Attachment 2

New Safety Course Graduate Sticker



Attachment 3

RECOMMENDED LIFE FOR TYPES OF SNOWMOBILE BRIDGES
AS PER MANUFACTURERS

Wheeler Consolidated

Dave – 1-800-328-3986

Steel – 0-50 years

Oil Treated Lumber 30-50 years

Water Treated Lumber 20-30 years

Custom Manufacturing

Theresa – 608-676-2282

Steel 30-40 years (pins)

Spooner Machine

Randy – 888-552-0835

Steel on concrete or steel abutments – 40 years

Steel on wood abutments – 25 years

United Construction / United Hydro

Scott Boyea – 920-273-0636

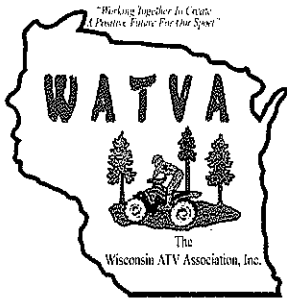
Steel – 50 years

U.P. Fabricating

Rick Kauttila – 906-445-4400

Steel 25-50 years – deck – bridge 50 years +

Also has rental bridges - \$40 day depending on length (takes 2 weeks to get)



Public Hearing
3/23/10

Assembly Committee on Public Safety

Testimony provided by Randy Harden & Rob McConnell (president and vice-president)
of the Wisconsin ATV Association (WATVA)

Chair – Representative Anthony Staskunas

*Representatives Bob Ziegelbauer, David Cullen, Jeff Smith, Teresa Berceau, Garey Bies,
Alvin Ott, and Lee Nelson*

***Re: AB 841 - Relating to intoxicated operation of ATVs, snowmobiles, motorboats and
motor vehicles***

Requesting your support for this bill

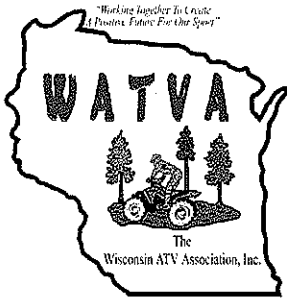
Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration to help us update and improve our state's record about being serious when it comes to drinking and driving. Whether on our roadways or the backcountry trails and waterways; we all know the deadly consequences of impaired driving.

Over the past several years the DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement facilitated a series of meetings, pulling together the leaders within the respective recreational communities. This group was brought up to speed on the trends that have developed in our state as well as surrounding states, related to recreational vehicle use and the OWI issue. It's important that all three Wisconsin programs take a course of action that protects the well being and safety of the families who participate in each of the three sports.

Wisconsin ATV Association Inc.
3321 Behrens Parkway

Sheboygan, WI 53081
www.watva.org | info@watva.org





It became clear to me the way to fight the OWI battle is on a more unified front that involves Wisconsin's three most popular motorized activities. The crossover among participants in all three venues is why this bill makes sense.

When I was first asked how our members stood on this legislative concept, I was uncertain myself. We also wanted to know what the general ATV public thought about it. To gauge accurate answers we compiled a memo that summarized the ideas and sent them to our clubs and posted on our web site. We asked those in our e-mail network to send the document to their friends and family.

In April of 2009 we held 2 panel workshops on this topic, inviting key representatives from the group that had worked together in bringing this package forward. After much discussion and overview by the panel fielding questions from the membership a ballot vote was taken. Ninety two percent (92%) of the members voting agreed that the current penalties affecting ATV riders who choose to operate while intoxicated are not strong enough!

Next we paired down the next vote between two different options. Option number one was to tie in recreational vehicle OWI to a person's driver's license on the second offense. 64% favored this approach.

Option number two tied all three recreations together that would suspend those types of driving privileges but would not be tied to a person's drivers license. The remaining 36% favored going in that direction.

Continued safety and alcohol awareness education, along with public outreach remains important to battle this growing trend. Equally important is coordinating law enforcement strategies to get ahead of this problem.

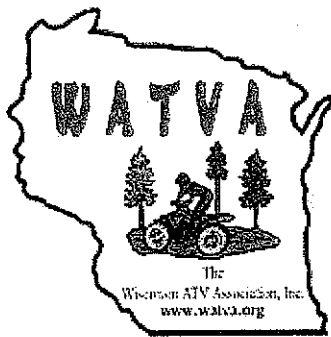
Our organization strongly favors this bill and requests your support.

Thank you again for this opportunity to help us manage this recreational sport and industry for the betterment of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin ATV Association Inc.
3321 Behrens Parkway

Sheboygan, WI 53081
www.watva.org | info@watva.org





Governor Jim Doyle
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

Secretary Matt Frank
Dept. of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

Wisconsin ATV Association,
Inc. (WATVA)
3321 Behrens Parkway
Sheboygan, WI 53081
Phone (920) 694-0583
www.watva.org

July 13, 2009

Re: Support for stronger OWI penalties on Wisconsin trails & waterways

Dear Governor Doyle and Secretary Frank:

The Wisconsin ATV Association (WATVA) is comprised of ATV enthusiasts who promote responsible use and enjoyment of our outdoor sport. One of our primary goals is to promote the image of off-highway vehicle recreation as family oriented, which includes our highest efforts toward safety and community ethics. Furthermore our best efforts are to ensure behaviors of ATV riders who demonstrate respect for other trail users while understanding common industry safety issues that affect themselves and others.

In recent years the increase in the number of snowmobile fatalities has been correlated with increased OWI use. The trend indicates increasing problems and numbers of deaths with this lethal mixture of drinking and driving recreational vehicles, just as it does in automobiles on our roadways.

Certainly there is a crossover between the owners and riders of snowmobiles, ATVs and motorized boating here in Wisconsin. OWI use, whether riding on our ATV trail systems, on snow trails or on state waterways, is of the highest concern to our organization as I'm sure it is to both of you.

The DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement is to be commended for facilitating a series of meetings between representatives from the Governor's Snowmobile Council, the Governor's State Trails Council, the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs, the Off Road Vehicle Council, the Wisconsin ATV Association and Department of Transportation. These setting also included invitations and participation from various boating and lake groups, along with various DNR staff that is knowledgeable about the three different registration programs.

Continued safety and alcohol awareness education, along with public outreach to the various motorized outdoor recreational enthusiasts, remains important to battle this growing trend. Equally important is coordinating law enforcement strategies to get a handle on and ahead of this problem.



Wisconsin ATV Association,
Inc. (WATVA)

3321 Behrens Parkway
Sheboygan, WI 53081
Phone (920) 694-0583
www.watva.org

During our meetings we discussed how our three different recreational vehicle programs are trying to address this situation individually. It became apparent a unified front is needed, working as one larger entity with a more proactive mindset. This group came up with an action plan that needs your input and ultimately your support if we all agree something needs to be done to protect our three recreational programs and our various constituencies.

The Wisconsin ATV Association took this approach to our full membership this past April at our annual workshops & meeting. After much debate and discussion provided by a panel workshop on this topic, a ballot vote was taken. Ninety two percent (92%) of the members voting agreed that the current penalties affecting ATV riders who choose to operate while intoxicated (OWI) are not strong enough!

The following increased penalties were the ones our organization voted to endorse:

- 1) Tie all three recreational vehicles OWI violations together. In other words if a person has an OWI while operating their boat, it has a negative impact on their ability to legally operate an ATV or snowmobile.
- 2) If convicted of OWI, suspend all three recreational vehicle operating privileges for a period of time (to be determined).
- 3) Unify all monetary penalties for OWI to the highest current penalty (they are all different at this time).
- 4) Tie-in with a person's automobile driver's license on the second offense.

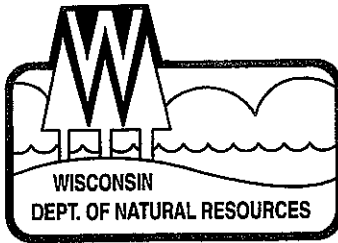
The Wisconsin ATV Association (WATVA) requests your help. We encourage and request your assistance to recruit willing lawmaker's to introduce a legislative initiative in this direction. Because this effort applies to other programs beyond ATV, your clout and support would be of paramount importance.

Thank you in advance for your leadership to help us protect and improve our 3 recreational programs that are so important to Wisconsin's citizens and our tourism economy.

Best Regards,

President

Vice-President



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor
Matthew J. Frank, Secretary

101 S. Webster St.
Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7921
Telephone 608-266-2621
FAX 608-267-3579
TTY Access via relay - 711

October 1, 2009

#5308

Randy Harden, President
Robert McConnell, Vice President
Wisconsin ATV Association, Inc.
3321 Behrens Parkway
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Dear Mr. Harden and Mr. McConnell:

Thank you for writing to me about proposed legislation on operating while intoxicated (OWI) penalties for snowmobiles, ATVs, boats and other motorized recreational vehicles. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

My staff and I share your concern about injuries and deaths caused by driving recreational vehicles while intoxicated. I applaud your initiative to evaluate possible options, develop consensus, and propose new OWI legislation.

I encourage you to express your views to and work directly with your legislators. We are working to garner legislative support. If you would like an update on the status of your proposals, please feel free to call Paul Heinen, DNR Legislative Liaison, at 608.266.2120 or email him at Paul.Heinen@wisconsin.gov. Again, thanks for your interest and proactive work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Matt Frank
Secretary

cc: Governor Jim Doyle
Paul Heinen



State of Wisconsin GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

October 1, 2009

Randy Harden, Chair
4422 North 50th Street
Sheboygan, WI 53083
(920) 694-0583 (W)
randy.harden@nohvis.com
Representing Off-Road Vehicles

Ken L. Carpenter, Vice Chair
N3255 County Road A
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538-9151
(608) 242-8665 (w)
(608) 576-4104 (h)
witrails@yahoo.com
Representing Equestrians

Robbie Webber, Secretary
2613 Stevens Street
Madison, WI 53705
(608) 233-1390 (h)
robbie@robbiewebber.org
Representing Bicycling

Thomas Huber
Wis. DOT, Rm. 901
P.O. Box 7913
Madison, WI 53703-7913
(608) 267-7757 (w)
(608) 231-3138 (h)
thomas.huber@wisconsin.gov
Representing Department of
Transportation

James Joque
1416 Lakehurst Drive
Mosinee, WI 54455
(715) 346-3365 (w)
(715) 212-4901 (h)
jjoque@uwsp.edu
Representing Disabled

Mike McFadzen
N5549 Kathryn Drive
Plymouth, WI 53073
(920) 457-4461 ext.1351 (w)
(920) 892-6271 (h)
mcfadzen@msn.com
Representing Cross-Country Skiing

David W. Phillips
30 Southwick Circle
Madison, WI 53717
(608) 833-5467 (h)
maddavie@earthlink.net
Representing Hiking/Ice Age Trail

Thomas J. Thornton
22315 Sunset Acres Lane
Grand View, WI 54839
(715) 763-3418 (w)
(715) 763-3377 (h)
tri-county@cheqnet.net
Representing Snowmobiling

Governor James Doyle
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
Secretary Matt Frank
101 S. Webster Street
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Doyle and Secretary Frank:

At the April 28, 2009 meeting of the Governor's State Trails Council, the problem of operating motorized recreational vehicles while intoxicated was discussed. A report by the snowmobile representative, Tom Thornton, detailed the alarming increase in vehicle crashes involving intoxicated snowmobile operators. Injuries and deaths in Wisconsin snowmobile crashes far exceed those in Michigan and Minnesota even though the seasons are longer and there are greater numbers of snowmobile riders in those states. Those states saw a dramatic decrease in injuries and deaths when OWI penalties were increased for operators of recreational vehicles.

The members of the Council believe that the difference in the injury and death statistics between Wisconsin and surrounding states is that OWI penalties in Wisconsin are too weak and ineffective. Consequently, the Governor's State Trails Council recommends that the following penalties be included in the statutes for operating motor vehicles while intoxicated:

- A second conviction for operating a recreational vehicle while intoxicated within a five year period would be applied to the operator's automobile driver's license.
- If the automobile driver's license of an operator of a recreational vehicle is currently suspended, a conviction for operating a recreational vehicle while intoxicated will count as a second conviction against the operator's automobile driving privileges.
- OWI penalties would be applied equally to operators of snowmobiles, motorboats and all off highway motorized vehicles.

Similar recommendations are being considered by the following organizations:

**Wisconsin Snowmobile Recreation Council,
Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs
Wisconsin ATV Association
Off Road Vehicle Council
Wisconsin Lakes Association**



Printed on
Recycled
Paper

The Governor's State Trails Council urges you to promote and support legislation to reduce recreational vehicle fatalities and injuries. The Council believes that the changes that we recommend will accomplish this end and that motorized recreational sports will again be something that families can enjoy together.

Sincerely,

Members of the Governor's State Trails Council



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor
Matthew J. Frank, Secretary

101 S. Webster St.
Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7921
Telephone 608-266-2621
FAX 608-267-3579
TTY Access via relay - 711

November 2, 2009

#5592

Randy Harden, Chair
Governor's State Trails Council
4422 North 50th Street
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Dear Mr. Harden:

Thank you and the other members of the Governor's State Trails Council for writing to me about proposed legislation on operating while intoxicated (OWI) penalties for snowmobiles, ATVs, boats and other motorized recreational vehicles. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

My staff and I share your concern about injuries and deaths caused by driving recreational vehicles while intoxicated. Wisconsin's higher injury and death rates compared to neighboring states are troubling. I applaud your initiative to work with other recreational vehicle groups to develop and propose new OWI legislation.

I encourage you to express your views to and work directly with your legislators. As representatives of all trail users in Wisconsin, your views are highly valued. If you would like an update on the status of your proposals, please feel free to call Paul Heinen, DNR Legislative Liaison, at 608.266.2120 or email him at Paul.Heinen@wisconsin.gov. Again, thanks for your interest and proactive work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Matt Frank
Secretary

cc: Governor Jim Doyle
Paul Heinen

Assembly Bill 841
Testimony March 23, 2010
Richard (Rick) Steimel

Presented to the honorable members of the
Assembly Committee on Public Safety

OPENING:

Thank you to the Authors and Co-sponsors.

AB841 is a safety bill that addresses OWI violations with stronger penalties for persons operating motorized transportation.

PROFILE:

Although I am a present member of Wisconsin's Snowmobile Recreation Council and past member of numerous snowmobile organizations at all levels in Wisconsin, I appear today as a citizen snowmobiler, in strong support of AB841.

My service on the SRC goes back 13 years, with 12 of those where I served as chair for the law enforcement committee.

I have prepared snowmobile fatality statistics for about the past 26 years, and also served on the WDNR Ad Hoc committee that met on 9/11/08, 1/13/09, and 4/7/09 to explore the support for stronger OWI laws among user groups representing ATV's, boating, and Snowmobiling. This committee found strong support for what is now AB841 before us.

I appear as a snowmobiler for 46 years, having just ridden 4,963 miles during the 2009-2010 season, and as an active volunteer who has been talking to landowners and putting in trails for about the last 35 years.

HISTORY:

Wisconsin's first snowmobile laws passed in 1971, and have always contained language that prohibits snowmobilers from operating while impaired.

During the winter of 1999-2000, Wisconsin's snowmobile death rate shot up to 39. On 1/31/2000 the governor directed the SRC to address safety measures to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths. At that time the SRC and LE Committee began looking for options, and legislation was eventually started, and included OWI initiatives, but the legislation died out.

A legislative committee was also established and presented their recommendations. Included in those recommendations was unification of OWI violations and penalties among recreational vehicle users.

Since that time (2000), the SRC and LE Committee have been working to come up with something that would be supportive and meaningful, and following the recommendations of the WDNR Ad Hoc committee meetings in 2009, AB841 eventually emerged.

DISCUSSION & SUMMARY OF BILL:

The SRC reflects in its minutes which are open to the public (7/20/09 meeting in Portage), a vote showing majority support and to proceed for legislation with the stronger OWI penalties, including a DL tie-in upon a second conviction of operating a recreational vehicle while impaired.

The bill is hoped to work similar to what Michigan and Minnesota presently have, which began a downward trend in snowmobile fatalities since being enacted in the late 1990's.

The bill does not change the current 0.080 BAC, and does not require an appropriation increase for more law enforcement; it merely strengthens and unifies the penalties for OWI violations, and also provides for a DL tie-in upon a second conviction of OWI on a recreational vehicle. The DL tie-in will be the single most deterrent to persons who might otherwise choose to operate while impaired.

CLOSING:

Wisconsin needs AB841, as it will provide more safety to persons operating any type of motorized travel on any highway, waterway, or trail that is open to the public—safety from having to share their travel with alcoholic impaired operators.

Assembly Committee on Public Safety
March 23, 2010

Assembly Bill 841
Presented to the honorable members of the
Committee of Public Safety in the Assembly

Thank You to the committee for the opportunity to testify on the Assembly Bill 841

My name is Charles Griffith ,currently I am the Vice President of Safe and Sober : Wisconsin Snowmobilers United
Our group is made up of different people from all walks of life and backgrounds, and our ultimate goal is to make the sport of atv-ing ,boating and snowmobiling safer for other generations to come.

I have been involved in snowmobiling for almost thirty years, and I have seen a lot of changes to snowmobiling.
Last year (08-09 season) a friend of mine lost two members of his family both were (26 yrs old) to a impaired snowmobiler. His family was devastated.
This past season (09-10) another friend of mine lost his niece (17 yrs old) to a freak accident ,where the operator was also impaired, this time by drugs. There is a lot of bad feelings for snowmobilers from these families.
These two incidents were a personal eye opener for me ,I had to do something. This was my wake up call, I started reaching out to whoever would listen. That is why I am here today !!!!!

Right now "WE" the public and all of the end user group, have a great opportunity to make this a reality . Our state unfortunately has no laws on the books to do what this bill is proposing to do. With the vast trails and lakes in Wisconsin we are a motorsports enthusiast's playground.

Our neighbors to the East and West (Michigan and Minnesota) have laws ,like the bill that is being presented today. With these laws these states have seen a reduction in alcohol related deaths. Plain and simple " Drunk driving is drunk driving , it doesn't matter what you are operating."
Since these states have introduced this legislation , they have seen the number of alcohol related deaths on atv's ,boat's and snowmobiles drop dramatically. The fines were increased ,along with penalties and this really makes a person stop and think before they operate one of these types of recreational machines while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

With all this being said, one question still remains in my mind. Why doesn't Wisconsin have this type of legislation / laws in place ???

A.T.V. clubs are in support of this ,boaters I have talked to also support this , but what about snowmobilers ??

Safe and Sober : Wisconsin Snowmobilers United supports this.
What about the AWSC (Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs)? Since the early nineteen ninties they have talked about it .

But even now in 2010 nothing has still not been done yet. If they have the best interests of snowmobilers in mind ,then why haven't they (AWSC) proposed legislation that would

help address this core problem that has plagued snowmobiling for so long.

Restoring Vintage Sleds p. 42

**HOW-TO: Stud Your Sled
For The Best Hook-Up**

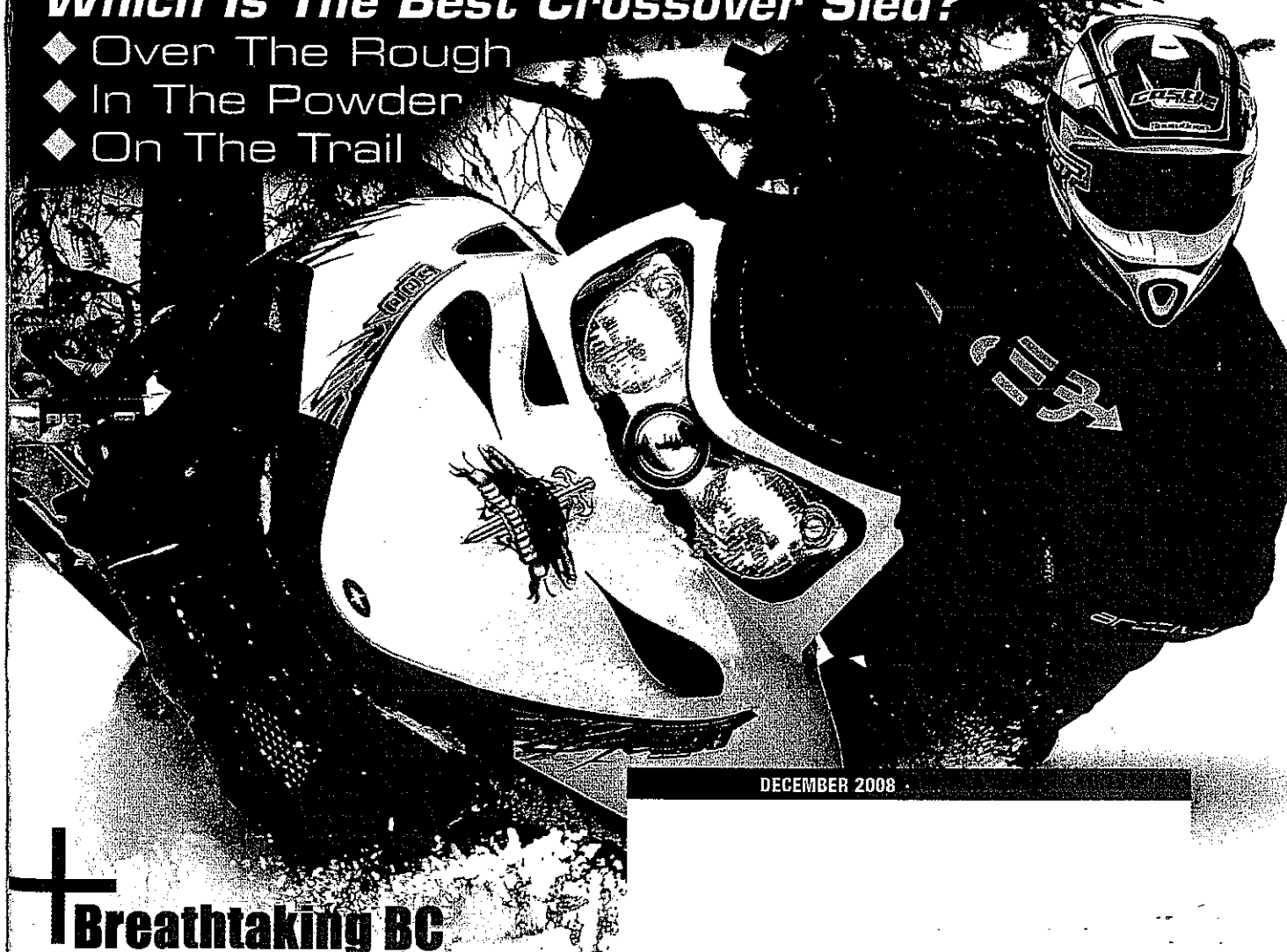
SNOWGOER®

WORLD'S #1 SNOWMOBILE MAGAZINE

ALL-TERRAIN SHOOTOUT!

Which Is The Best Crossover Sled?

- ◆ Over The Rough
- ◆ In The Powder
- ◆ On The Trail



DECEMBER 2008

**Breathtaking BC
Two 800s Tested** p. 30

Premium Fuel: A Waste? p. 20

CORNER BAR

ST. MICHAEL



Mixed Drink

By Lynn Keillor

The precarious blend of alcohol and snowmobiles

It was a friend who talked Edward Thorne into taking an after-dark snowmobile ride in the winter of 2000. They were on a trip near Marquette, Michigan.

While on the ride, Thorne noticed fresh tracks that veered off the trail to a railroad grade — which was also marked for no trespassing.

"Me being a dad, a husband and having kids around, I just had that gut feeling — the one you get when one of your kids is hurt," he said. He parked his snowmobile, jumped on the back with his friend, and followed the tracks to what he described as a "horrific crash." A 21-year-old snowmobiler had hit a cable.

"We came upon his buddy, who was trying to do what he could," Thorne said. "He was nearly cut in two. But before I even got up to them, I could smell the alcohol."

The culture of alcohol use and snowmobiles has come under recent public scrutiny with the high-profile death of Chicago newscaster Randy Salerno in northern Wisconsin in January 2008. He wasn't the only fatality in Wisconsin last winter — and not the only alcohol-related death. In the 2007-08 season, 25 people died on Wisconsin trails; 18 of them, or 64 percent, involved alcohol. Wisconsin is not alone; other states have similar snowmobile/alcohol-related death percentages.

Undercover investigations by mainstream media portray snowmobilers as having late-night, alcohol-infused orgies with horsepower. Within the snowmobile community, there's debate on how to approach the use of alcohol and the sport of snowmobiling. Laws on alcohol use and snowmobiles vary from state to state, as do opinions on how to handle the combination of the two.

On that night in Michigan, something snapped with Thorne. "I was on vacation. I was going to take two weeks to ride and have fun. It was something I'd been doing for 14 years," he said. "I said, 'That's it. Something has to be done about drinking and riding.'"

Thorne, of Kimberly, Wisconsin, founded an organization called Snowmobilers Against Drunk Riders (SADR). When his seasonal employment ends each fall, he devotes his time to raising awareness of the consequences of alcohol intoxication and snowmobiling. He's

had varying success with his goals. He's been able to catch the attention of some Wisconsin lawmakers when lobbying for stricter intoxicated snowmobiler legislation; he's met with resistance when posting "don't drink and ride" information at bars.

"I want there to be a logo at establishments, something that reminds snowmobilers that they don't have to get hammered up to have fun," Thorne said. "I ride fast, I ride hard, but when I have a drink, I park my sled and I'm done for the day."

said, 'Look, there's a group of MSA officers and they're all drinking.' At that point, we knew that, as an association, we'd have to take the higher road. I don't think it's wrong to have a beer and a burger; it's the image it presents. We can dance around the subject all we want, we can say 'know when to say when' or other campaigns, but bottom line is that there is only one safe stance to take."

MSA adopted a strict policy of zero-tolerance during any association ride. It also asked its membership to do the same in their personal snowmobile activities by taking a zero-tolerance pledge while riding. More than 15,000 snowmobilers returned a "pledge" postcard to the MSA office that season, and received a special sticker and luggage tag in return. The following season, MSA had 100,000 stickers and tags printed. "We had to re-order five years later," Manson said. MSA also added increased alcohol awareness education to its youth safety training, did a billboard campaign and sponsored zero-tolerance poker runs — all were deemed successful.

The program's biggest success is with public perception. "Our negative press has gone down over the years because of zero tolerance," Manson said. When members of the media call for

Done For The Day

Directors from the Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) were on a group ride in 2000. They stopped at a bar to get some food, and a few members ordered a beer.

"There were 12 or 15 of us, and maybe two beer bottles on the table," said Bill Manson, executive director of MSA. "Someone walked by and

Water Proof Tunnel Pak
POWDERPAK
Wave F-200

Made in the USA

ChromAlloy

Custom Front & Rear Bumpers
(Polaris, Yamaha, Ski Doo)

F Series Tunnel Kit
(Twin Spar)

Tunnel Strips
(Fits most machines)
Standard Strips 16"
Mini Strips 11.5"

Includes Tunnel Bag
Easy Installation
Reduces Weight (2lbs)
Enhances Appearance

Performance Silencers
(Polaris, Yamaha, Arctic Cat, Ski Doo)

Float Plates
(Polaris, Yamaha, Arctic Cat, Ski Doo)

For Full Product Line:
www.SkinzProtectiveGear.com
Ph 320-243-8771

PROTECTIVE GEAR

LEGAL OVERVIEW

MINNESOTA: .08 BAC; violations tie into driver's license. Potential charge of a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor or felony-level Driving While Intoxicated (DWI). Misdemeanor penalty may include up to a \$1,000 fine, possible jail sentence and loss of snowmobile operating privileges for one year. Gross misdemeanor charges apply for .20-or-higher BAC and includes up to \$3,000 in fines, loss of motor vehicle driver's license and loss of license plates. Snowmobiles are subject to seizure.

MICHIGAN: BAC of .08 percent; violations tie into driver's license, up to six points.

WISCONSIN: BAC of .08 percent; fine of \$627 for first offense. A second offense within five years is a criminal offense with jail time. Snowmobiles cannot be seized by arresting wardens.

ONTARIO: BAC of .08; operating a snowmobile under the influence of alcohol is a criminal offense and carries the same penalties as driving a car, which may include license suspension and a \$600 fine for a first offense.

NEW YORK: BAC of .08 percent; court can suspend riding privileges and registration. A rider who refuses a breath test receives a suspension of the privilege to operate a snowmobile, pending a DMV hearing.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: BAC of .08 percent; snowmobiling while intoxicated is a criminal offense. It includes fines up to \$1,200 and loss of snowmobile operation privilege for a minimum of 90 days and a maximum of 180 days for the first offense. Non-residents may lose riding privileges at home due to reciprocity agreements. Sobriety checkpoints are legal.

STRIP IT * STICK IT * RIP IT

ARCTICFX

GRAPHICS.COM

FULL HOOD GRAPHIC KITS

Arctic Cat • Polaris • Ski-Doo • Yamaha

ArcticFXgraphics.com
586.786.9851

an MSA comment on alcohol-related accidents, Manson points to the zero-tolerance stance.

The stance wasn't without some cost. The organization lost some members, and enforcing zero-tolerance on rides wasn't always easy, even among the board members. Manson recalled telling a long-time board member that if he ordered a beer, he'd have to sit at a separate table, ride home by himself and remove himself from the board.

About the same time, MSA pushed for legislation to link alcohol-related snowmobile offenses to a driver's motor vehicle license points. Minnesota has a similar law; Wisconsin and New York do not.

Fatality data before and after the zero-tolerance program is not conclusive to its effectiveness. In the 2006-07 season, 67 percent of fatal snowmobile accidents in Michigan involved alcohol; in 2007-08, it was 38 percent. In the past 10 years, however, there's been a general decline in overall fatal accidents. The season with the most fatalities (46 in 2002-03) had a lower-than-average percentage of alcohol involvement — 45 percent.

Michigan isn't the only place snowmobilers hear a strong zero-tolerance message. The four snowmobile manufacturers adopted a "drinking

and snowmobiling don't mix" policy in 1995; the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations works with MADD Canada to promote zero-tolerance throughout the country. The American Council of Snowmobile Organizations has a voluntary zero-tolerance program for its member states. The International Association of Snowmobile Administrators, made up of state and provincial trail administrators, is working on its own zero-tolerance campaign.

At the International Snowmobile Congress in 2002, snowmobile state and provincial associations adopted MSA's zero-tolerance program, which includes the ditty, "Zero tolerance I say 'til I'm done for the day." Despite strong initial support for the zero-tolerance message, Manson said many states have gone back to a "drink in moderation" stance.

"One part of the public is 100 percent for [zero-tolerance], the other part of public says that they don't think there's anything wrong with stopping for a burger and an alcoholic beverage at lunch," said Gary Eddy, for the Wisconsin Bureau of Law Enforcement in the Department of Natural Resources. "I think they're missing what the zero-tolerance message means. It's the best policy to guarantee your safety and the safety of others. I don't think any-

one can argue that it isn't the best policy."

On The Trail

When the phone rings in the middle of a winter night, Jim Jung knows it's going to be bad news. As a conservation warden for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in southern Oneida County and an expert in snowmobile accident reconstruction, he's typically one of the first people on the scene of a fatal crash.

He describes gory accidents in a matter-of-fact manner, such as the rider who hit a lake embankment too hard, lost control, launched through a basement door and went head-first into a chest freezer — helmetless. A game of chicken where neither backed off. A shallow-water drowning while pinned under a snowmobile.

Throw in aggravating factors such as spotty cell phone service, imprecise location information or longer response times and accidents can turn into desperate situations. In his experience, nearly 80 percent of snowmobile fatalities involve alcohol; speed is also a contributing factor.

The ones that get him, though, are the young fathers. "I had a fatal where the wife was pregnant with her third child, and the other two were under age seven," he said. "She called me a day or two after the accident, wondering how


arctiva
 PERFORMANCE POWERSPORTS OUTFITTER



COMP 3 JACKET \$150
 3XL-5XL / 1185
 AVAILABLE COLORS
 ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



COMP 3 BIB \$150
 3XL-5XL / 1185
 AVAILABLE COLORS
 ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



COMP 3 GLOVE \$40
 AVAILABLE COLORS
 ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

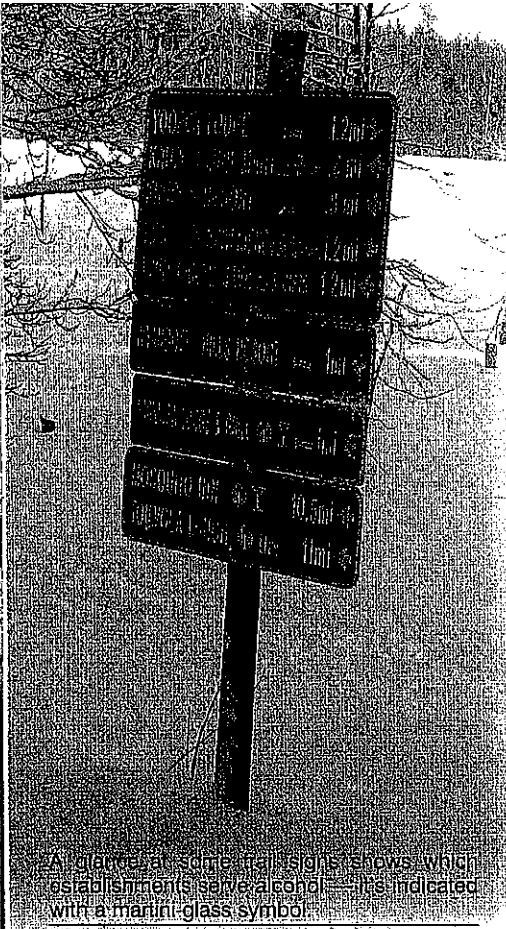
If you love race styling but require fully insulated outerwear, look no further than Comp3. 120 Holofill™ insulation, hand-warmer pockets, and full length leg zippers make this the perfect setup for the race-inspired snowmobiler. The Comp3 comes in five colors to match your styling needs. See your local Arctiva dealer today.



**TRIMODE
EQUIPPED**

**PARTS PARTS
UNLIMITED CANADA**

Available through your local authorized dealer
www.arctiva.com



A marker at some trail signs shows which establishments serve alcohol — it's indicated with a martini-glass symbol.

much he'd had to drink. I just thought, 'Man, that's got to be a terrible thing for her to go through.' A lot of people don't think of the long-term consequences."

Jung's territory, which includes Rhinelander, is a popular snowmobile area with some of the highest rates of snowmobile fatalities. He's worked there for 16 years, and knows exactly when snowmobiling shifts from a fun activity (daylight hours to early dusk) to a potentially dangerous game (after 9 p.m. on a weekend).

While the Wisconsin DNR promotes zero-tolerance, Jung's not against snowmobilers having a drink or having fun. "I think a lot of us in the field realize that people are up here recreating, they're going to go to dinner and have a drink or two," he said. "Responsibility is what I'm looking for."

Jung's job isn't limited to accident duty; it's also his job to hand out penalties — including citations for intoxicated snowmobiling.

While drunken snowmobilers come in all genders and ages, Jung said he sees the most violations from white males between the ages of 25 and 39. Eddy's statistics add that 46 percent of people arrested for intoxicated snowmobiling also have a similar violation on another motor vehicle. Minnesota statistics also confirm a pattern of habitual, multi-vehicle offenders.

In Wisconsin, as well as Minnesota, snowmo-

bile sobriety checkpoints are not allowed. Jung looks for other reasons to stop snowmobiles — speeding, stop-sign violations, illegal lights — and then checks for alcohol.

Jung always asks how many miles the rider has driven. He calls the high-mileage driver "active and hardcore" and less likely to drink. "If they've been out all day and have only gone 40 to 60 miles, and now it's 2:30 in the morning, you know what they've been doing," he said.

The state of Wisconsin is fully staffed with 170 field wardens, and includes a specially trained snowmobile accident reduction team that travels to snowmobile areas during high-traffic events, as the budget allows. The visibility isn't enough for Eddy's tastes, and he relies on local sheriff patrols to pitch in.

The enforcement budget is set in advance, and Eddy hopes each year that it will last for the entire season. In the 2007-08 season, the enforcement budget dried up about a month before the end of the season. Eddy said he has, in work hours, the equivalent of nine full-time snowmobile patrol jobs; he did an analysis a few years ago that indicated the demand required the equivalent of 12 to 14 full-time workers.

The Business End

Bosacki's Boat House in Minocqua, Wisconsin, has one of the must-see bars in Northern Wisconsin. It's a beautifully carved, turn-of-the-century oak masterpiece in a family-owned establishment that welcomes boaters in the summer and snowmobilers in the winter.

Owner Harlan Bosacki makes it clear that his business is a supper club — not a bar — and that its main sales come from food. He said he doesn't get late-night, barhopping snowmobilers at his place, though he does serve plenty of snowmobilers. His bartenders all take a state-required alcohol-awareness course on how to spot intoxicated patrons.

It only takes a glance at a Wisconsin trail sign to see which establishments serve alcohol — it's indicated with a martini-glass symbol. These bars, often far removed from the main roads, count on snowmobilers for wintertime income.

Trails in Wisconsin, as well as in neighboring states, travel from bar to bar. It's a vestige of the early years of trail building, and in many cases, bar and restaurant owners are active, supportive members of local snowmobile clubs. Bosacki is a good example. He no longer does the physical end of trail upkeep, but he donates to snowmobile causes.

This support is part of the reason the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) has cried foul to alcohol-free snowmobiling. Business owners also balk at the zero-tolerance message, instead citing personal choice and business sense.

Bosacki said claims of Wisconsin bartenders over-serving patrons, as claimed by mainstream media, is rubbish. "It's not a matter of over-service. Everyone has a different tolerance to alcohol, and the bartender doesn't know how much that person has already smoked, shot or snorted before coming to the bar," he said. "Then you serve them one drink and they go out and get killed. Whose fault is it? Nobody up here is intentionally over-serving anyone. I'll cut off so

INTOXICATING FACTS

- Since the 1997-98 snowmobile season, there have been **643 CONVICTIONS** for intoxicated snowmobiling in Minnesota.
- A 10-year study of Manitoba snowmobiling injuries found that **88 PERCENT** of the patients had consumed alcohol before their injuries; **70 PERCENT** of the patients had a blood alcohol level more than 0.08 percent.
- Since 2003, the majority of Wisconsin snowmobile fatalities have taken place in two counties: Vilas (**20**) and Oneida (**19**).
- In the 2007-08 season, alcohol was noted in **38 PERCENT** of snowmobile fatalities in Michigan; **64 PERCENT** in Wisconsin; and **44 PERCENT** in Minnesota.
- In a 17-year snowmobile fatality study in Ontario, males accounted for **91.2 PERCENT** of the **548** deaths and were a median age of **30** when killed, while females were **24**.
- In that same study, more than three-quarters of all snowmobile fatalities occurred in single motor vehicle collisions and **83.2 PERCENT** of snowmobile drinking and driving fatalities occurred in single-vehicle collisions.

Sources: Minnesota DNR, SmartRisk; Wisconsin DNR; Michigan DNR

fast I'll make your head spin. I don't think any bar owner truly wants to hurt their customers. We want them to come back."

Pete Madland, executive director of the Tavern League of Wisconsin, calls zero-tolerance programs "draconian."

"We would not agree to a zero-tolerance message," he said, "I think a person can go out, have a drink and snowmobile responsibly. People do it every day, and do it responsibly. I guess our stand is 'don't ride drunk.' We don't support drunk snowmobiling. We do think it's all right to have a drink and ride a snowmobile, though."

Manson said his feedback from bar owners has been positive, generally, as they have not seen decreases in overall revenues. "The bar owners tell me that their food bills have stayed the same, but that revenue from beer and wine is down during the day," he said. "But they also say they make more on pop, hot chocolate and coffee."

Larry Sevenski, owner of Larry's Seven-Ski Inn in Elmira, Michigan, said he's seen a change in clientele habits. Liquor and beer sales are down; food and non-alcoholic beverage sales are up. It used to be that two-thirds of patrons would order alcohol; now it's at about a third. Margins on alcohol versus non-alcohol drinks are about the same, he said.

Still he doesn't agree with a zero-tolerance message. "Why are snowmobilers singled out more than driving a car or a boat?" he said. "Having one or two drinks is not drunk driving."

Bosacki said that an all-around zero-tolerance policy would kill alcohol-serving businesses. "You should be able to have a couple of cocktails, go out and have some fun," he said.

That said, he has little patience for drunken snowmobiling, particularly with high-horsepower sleds. He said he'd support linking intoxicated snowmobiling offenses to a person's driving license. "Alcohol, drugs and speed is what's killing people on the trails," he said.

That type of law may not be far off in Wisconsin's future. Such a law failed in 2000, but Eddy said it might come up again. "It would be an added deterrent, and we do have reciprocity with other states," he said, adding that if people need their motor vehicles, they'll start making the right choices.

"This would be a good way to increase safety and enjoyment," Eddy said. "We will start seeing an increase of families out there snowmobiling. Every season, we hear that people won't ride at night or on weekends because drunks and crazies are on the trail. It's a terrible thing to hear that people are afraid to be on public trails." **ST**

E-Z OFF

#1 In Trailer Slides Since 1993

TRAILER SLIDES

8" Wide Low Profile Slide
(Not pictured)

An extra wide multigroove slide which will easily take wide dual runner skis such as Simmons or Ski-Doo Precision



6" Low Profile Slide

- #1 choice of snowmobilers
- Does not create an obstruction on trailer
- Allows for loading different width sleds
- Can turn skis out of our low profile without lifting sled
- Countersunk screw slots help prevent buckling

Slide Guides, Inc.

Ph: 920-733-2256

visit e-zoffslides.com for a dealer near you

Traction (stud) Mat
Gives added traction on ramp or deck and protects from studs.
3/8" x 15" x 6 ft.



Kwik Klamp

SNOWMOBILE TIE-DOWN SYSTEM

ONE PULL AND YOUR READY TO GO!

QUICK & EASY! FITS YOUR EXISTING BAR! NO TRAILER MODIFICATIONS NEEDED!

CALL TO ORDER!

\$64.95


EACH

plus S&H

1-877-571-3770




WWW.KWIK-KLAMP.COM



SIMMONS

WWW.FLEXI-SKI.COM

FLEXI-SKI

Gen 2

The Simmons Gen 2 Flexi-Ski takes all the great qualities of the original Flexi-Ski and magnifies them. At 10" across, the Gen 2 is the greatest mountain ski ever—excelling in incredible stability, flotation and maneuverability in deep snow. The skis flex to absorb bumps, resulting in added suspension to your sled. Unsurpassed technology. Snowmobiling has never been so fun.

(435) 752-4951

AWSC CLOTHING

T-SHIRT

S-XL.....	\$17.00
2X, 3X, 4X.....	\$18.90

SWERTSHIRT

X-XL.....	\$21.45
2X, 3X.....	\$23.60
4X.....	\$27.90

HODDED SWERTSHIRT

S-XL.....	\$27.70
2X, 3X.....	\$30.44
4X.....	\$35.45

LONG SLEEVE DENIM

S-XL.....	\$40.25
2X.....	\$44.65
3X.....	\$48.10
4X.....	\$51.65

SPORT SHIRT

S-XL.....	\$27.90
2X.....	\$30.60

CREW NECK #775, V-NECK #795, SWEATERS

S-XL.....	\$39.10
2XL.....	\$41.10
3XL.....	\$42.10
4XL.....	\$43.60
5XL.....	\$45.10

GILDAN SPORT SHIRT

S-XL.....	28.30
2X, 3X.....	\$30.95

CAPS

(Black or Khaki).....	\$11.80
(Camo).....	\$12.10
(Flame Pattern).....	\$15.35



**Coming soon to the
AWSC Web Site!**

To place your order call or e-mail
Northwoods Sewing L.L.C.
St. Germain, Wis.
(715) 479-9642
awmatzdorf@gmail.com

The Painful Facts ... the Ultimate Price Paid

by Lauren Zener Bullis

I received my copy of the November issue of *Wisconsin Snowmobile News* and was flipping through it when I came across the editor's article *Painful Facts*. I then flipped to page 12 — *Real People, Real Lives* — and there in black and white was the summary of my dad's death. My dad, Craig Zener, was the first fatality of the 2005-06 season. I've seen these type of postings in different spots and they're always very cold and to the point; they never tell the story of who this person was. I wanted the chance to let people know that my dad was more than just a statistic. He was a husband, a father, a grandfather, and a friend, and, since his passing, he's left a hole in the hearts of those who knew him.

My story starts after the accident. It was 2:34 a.m. when my mom called to tell me my dad had been in an accident on his sled and he was now at Froedert Hospital. I got up, got ready, and went to pick up my mom and sister, and the three of us drove to Milwaukee. I really wasn't concerned because I had known so many different people who went to Froedert and they all came home; it never once dawned on me that this might be the last time I would see my dad. All I could think was how crabby he was going to be when we got there, he was the world's worst patient.

We arrived at the hospital and they took us to his room. I remember I could see him before we entered the room and I asked my sister if she was ready for this because he looked so much worse than I was ready for. We sat by his bedside for a couple hours; we never got to talk to a doctor. I do remember the nurse putting her hand on my mom's shoulder and saying, "It's going to be a long road with a lot of bumps along the way, but he's going to be ok." Then they took him for a CAT scan and that was the last time we saw him.

We waited in the family room to hear the results of the test and to see him again. My mom sent my sister home because we thought everything was going to be ok. They then placed my mom and I in a private room and the doctor came in to talk to us. The doctor started going over the details with us and all I could think was "please don't say it, please don't say it," and then she did. She looked straight at my mom and said "...and I'm sorry but he died." We both said the same things: "are you sure?" or "you must have the wrong family," but they didn't. It's a feeling I can't put into words and you only know how it feels if you've been through it.

I then realized we still had to tell my sister, and my mom insisted on making her come back to the hospital in case she wanted to see him. I had to call my uncle and ask him to bring her back to the hospital. He kept asking me what happened and I begged him not to make me tell him on the phone. I met my sister at the door and I just remember thinking how much her life was about to change; I would have done anything to spare her from having to go through this. I let my mom tell her alone — I couldn't bear to hear it again or see the look on her face — and I went and sat with Dad. It bothered me to know that he was all alone; I hated knowing that he died and none of us were there. I must have sat with him for an hour before Mom sent for me so we could go home. Leaving him there was the hardest thing I've ever had to do.

A few days later we got the autopsy report back. It was like losing him all over again because the doctors never even diagnosed his fatal injury. The force of the crash tore a hole in his aorta and he was bleeding out the entire time we sat there and no one could do anything for him.

We also learned that his blood alcohol was almost three times the legal limit. He and his friends rode from bar to bar, like so many other riders, never giving a thought to the consequences of drinking and driving a snowmobile. Because of that, our family has paid the ultimate price.

Since his death a year ago, he's missed so many moments, large and small. He missed my sister's high school graduation; her first day of college, his grandkids' birthdays, his daughters' birthdays, his 20th wedding anniversary, Christmas, Thanksgiving, and the list just goes on. He left me when I needed him to fulfill the promise he made to me on my wedding day. He left us all when we needed him the most.

Now I don't have my favorite person to ride snowmobiles with. Hitting the trails with my dad was my favorite thing to do with him. Now when I get on my sled, I can still see him on his, I can still hear him laughing with me out on the trails, and I would give anything to have just one more ride with him.

I hope this story will help people realize that there are real consequences to drinking and driving. I hope this will help at least one family from having to go through what our family has. I want riders to make decisions to ensure this won't be their last ride — and they'll get to come home to their families. ○



AP photo by Jeff Peters

SNOWMOBILERS RIDE along the Ashland County Snowmobile Trail near Marengo.

Tragic trips often start with a drink

By Robert Imrie
Associated Press writer

WAUSAU - Nearly half of the 200 people killed on snowmobiles in Wisconsin over the last decade were legally drunk, and all but one-third had some alcohol in their blood, an Associated Press review found.

The victims were mostly young men who crashed at night against trees in northern counties while riding snowmobiles as fast as 90 mph on trails and lakes with no speed limits and few traffic cops.

Nine of the drunken snowmobilers killed were too young to legally drink, including two teens on a night of what's common to the sport: tavern-hopping, a way to be sociable and warm up.

Near where 45-year-old William Miraglia died, officers found a nearly empty 200-milliliter bottle of Windsor Canadian whiskey. The laborer from rural Hayward drove his snowmobile through a stop sign, into a snowbank, through a picket fence and into a tree in January 1993.

Group calls for added safety

By Steve Wideman
Post-Crescent staff writer

The head of an alliance of Outagamie County snowmobile groups favors a plan to increase funding to put more law enforcement officers on state snowmobile trails, but said problems will still exist among a minority of snowmobile owners.

Robert Grode, president of the Outagamie County Snowmobile Alliance, said he wholeheartedly backs a proposal that would pro-

vide \$1.8 million in state funds to beef up safety and enforcement of snowmobile operations.

The proposal is called the 1% solution because the sport of snowmobiling is estimated to generate \$188 million in revenue for the state each year, said Gary Homuth, the DNR's snowmobile safety specialist.

The \$20, two-year registration fee on each snowmobile plus some gasoline tax revenues now finances the DNR's snowmobile

Please see **GROUP**, BACK PAGE

He and his passenger, 30-year-old Kevin Lindsay, had been drinking at Drifters Corral until the bar closed at 2 a.m. They were the last to leave, a bartender told investigators.

An autopsy showed Miraglia's blood-alcohol level was .31%, triple the legal limit of .10%, making him nearly comatose. A 140-pound man

has to have eight drinks in one hour just to reach the falling-down drunk level of 0.20%. The investigating officer said Miraglia was driving at a "high rate of speed." Lindsay's blood-alcohol level was .187%.

Snowmobiling and drinking go

Please see **MIX**, BACK PAGE

Results from studying 200 fatalities since the winter of 1986-87:

► **COUNTIES:** Sixty-one of Wisconsin's 72 counties recorded a snowmobile fatality. Vilas County topped the list with 19 deaths

► **SEX:** There were 180 males and 20 females killed.

► **AGE:** Nine victims were adolescents, ages 5 to 12; 20 were teen-agers; and 91 were in their 20s, meaning 60% of the people killed had not yet reached 30.

► **ALCOHOL:** Alcohol was found in 139 victims, of which 31 were not legally drunk

► **PASSENGERS:** Thirteen victims were passengers.

► **CAUSES:** The top two causes of fatalities were collisions with trees, 80, and drownings, 28. Twelve people died following a collision between two snowmobiles; 12 died after they collided with a vehicle.

► **DAY:** The deadliest day was Saturday, when 71 were killed, or 35% of the fatalities.

► **TIME:** The deadliest hour of the day was between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m.; when 34 snowmobilers died, or 17%. The six hours between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. claimed 102 fatalities, or more than half of those killed.

Source: Associated Press computer assisted review of state DNR record

Disaster follows mix of drinking, snowmobiles

From A-1

hand in hand, almost by design. The more than 16,000 miles of trails first established in Wisconsin more than 20 years ago were created to link bars, restaurants, gas stations, motels and even small towns. For example, a snowmobiler in Wausau can travel trails north all the way to Hurley — a 120-mile trip by car.

Snowmobile clubs and taverns still routinely sponsor what are called poker runs — a game of driving from one tavern to the next, picking up playing cards. The best poker hand wins a prize.

Some of the games last a weekend, some a week, some all season. The object is to get people to spend money at the taverns.

It is against the law to operate a snowmobile drunk in Wisconsin, but there is little enforcement.

Snowmobiling drunk is even more deadly when combined with speed. The trails have no speed limits and many snowmobiles can reach speeds of 100 mph.

"They think they are Tarzan," said snowmobiler Dan Stritzel, 28, of Whitewater, during a recent trip to snow-laden Hurley in northern Wisconsin. "We have a friend who is a vegetable because of snowmobiling and drinking. He wasn't wearing a helmet."

Stritzel's riding companion, Artie Foelker, 29, of Fort Atkinson, said it's no secret snowmobilers often drink. "Some guys can hardly walk when they get on there."

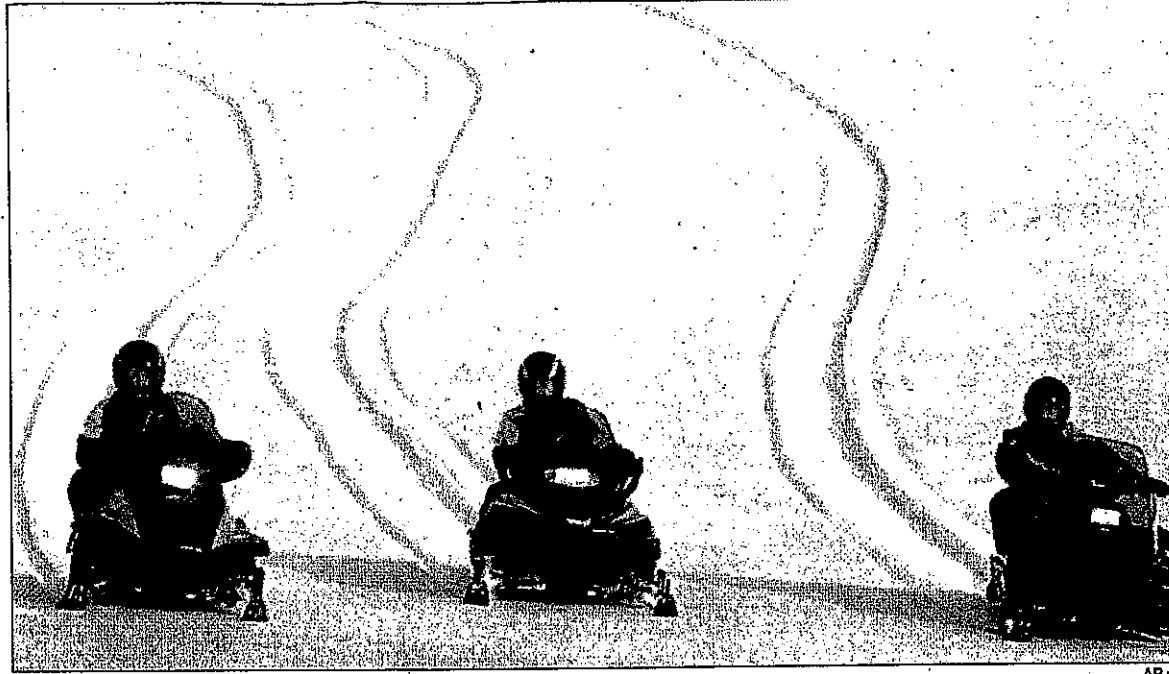
The AP's computer-assisted study of fatal accident reports filed with the state Department of Natural Resources by investigating wardens, law enforcement officers and county coroners shows some clear trends:

■ The number of snowmobile fatalities has increased with the popularity of the sport over the past decade: from nine in 1986-87 to a range between 20 and 30 over the past five winters.

■ Of the 200 snowmobilers killed over the past decade, alcohol was listed as a factor in 139 fatalities, or 70%.

■ Ninety-eight victims, or 49%, were legally drunk, meaning they had a blood-alcohol level of at least .10%.

■ Thirty-one victims, or 16%, who were not legally drunk had at least some alcohol in their blood.



SNOWMOBILERS GO FOR A RIDE on the Ashland County Snowmobile Trail near Marengo on March 1. Nearly half of the 200 people killed in snowmobile crashes in Wisconsin in the last decade were legally drunk.

■ Thirty victims, or 15%, had a blood-alcohol level at least double the legal limit to drive, including three who tested three times the legal limit.

■ Speed played a role in two-thirds of all fatal accidents. Of the 138 fatalities in which investigators determined speeds, about half died riding snowmobiles traveling between 50 mph and 95 mph.

■ Speed combined with alcohol caused many of the deaths. Of the fatal accidents involving alcohol, speed was cited as a factor in 64%.

■ Of those victims whose blood-alcohol level was at least double the legal limit to drive, speed was a factor in 70%.

Like Miraglia, most people with a blood-alcohol level above 0.255 are "close to a comatose situation," according to Gregg Miller, coordinator of a University of Wisconsin program that trains law enforcement and other professionals who work with drunken driving programs.

The AP review found 10 fatalities in that range.

"We have had them as high as 0.51 and they survived," said Gary Homuth, a snowmobile safety specialist for the DNR.

"If a snowmobiler would travel at reasonable speeds and have less to drink, we would save 75% of mis-

haps. We would," he said.

Better enforcement would also help, but the DNR can't do it without more money, he said.

The state's 130 DNR wardens spend a total 10,000 hours each season on patrols related to snowmobiles, which means each warden spends about three days a winter on snowmobile patrol. The agency would like to see that increase to at least eight, Homuth said.

During the five winters of 1990-91 through 1994-95, the DNR issued 969 citations to snowmobilers operating under the influence of alcohol, an average of 200 a season, he said.

Jim Saari, chairman of the Wisconsin Recreational Snowmobile Council, an advisory group, said perhaps 40% of the snowmobilers out for weekend fun drink some alcohol.

But habits are changing, he said. "They don't spend three to four hours in the bar and have a dozen beers."

Many people want to portray drinking and driving as an issue that is overpowering the snowmobile industry. "That's not true," Saari said.

There are 190,000 snowmobiles registered in Wisconsin plus thousands more from Illinois and Michigan that "come to play in Wisconsin," he said. Most travel at 1,000 miles a season.

sin," he said. Most travel at 1,000 miles a season.

"The number of miles driven sus the number of fatalities throws an entirely different light on subject," he said. "We are not ignoring the fact that people killed on a snowmobile. But body who thinks we are not going to have some people killed is kidding themselves."

Jeffrey Jorgensen, 18, and passenger, 19-year-old Vicki Morris, drowned Feb. 9, 1992, their machine sank in open water on Lake Nokomis. The blood-alcohol level for the Tomahawk was two times the legal limit drive.

The pair had been taverning that night, having stopped at least three different bars, and illegally served, said Dave Jorgensen, Jeffrey's father, who owns snowmobile dealership in Tomahawk.

Jorgensen, 47, who bought first snowmobile in 1969, said trails may be linked to tavern highways are, too. That's no problem, he said. People need responsible.

It took almost two years after death of his son before Jorgensen could actively ride again.

fatalities.

Group says safety, law enforcement will reduce accidents

From A-1

programs, including making payments to snowmobile clubs to maintain trails and put up signs, Homuth said.

"The current program, as we know it now is broke," he said. "We have just enough money to pay for the 16,000 miles of trails and our current level of enforcement and safety training."

Grode, whose alliance of 18 snowmobile clubs meets monthly to discuss issues and concerns facing snowmobilers, concurs.

"We can have all the rules we want, but if there are not enough DNR wardens and county snow patrols, the rules don't do us a bit of good," Grode said.

Grode is also a state-certified snowmobile safety instructor and a member of the Freedom Trail

Blazers snowmobile club.

He runs snowmobile safety course for youths ages 12-16.

"Every year we get more and more kids going through the course. We are hoping that as these kids get older this training will carry through," he said.

Grode said snowmobile operators, in general, are a very responsible group of people.

"We've got about 200 miles of trails in Outagamie County and not one death this year has involved anyone riding on the trails," he said.

Grode said it is unreasonable to label all snowmobilers as irresponsible because of the actions of a few.

Grode said his impression after reading statistics is that snowmobiling accidents involving alcohol are decreasing in number.

"A lot of accidents, I think, are

due to inexperienced riders. A guy goes out and buys the fastest, most powerful machine he can get, crashes it and there is 12 miles on the odometer. You can't blame anything but the rider," he said.

Grode said snowmobile clubs spend many hours negotiating easement rights with landowners, marking trails and clearing the trail of potentially deadly obstructions.

The trails are designed with safety in mind, Grode said. "If there is brush or a tree on the trail, we are more than happy to get it out of the way."

Tom Van Handel, who joined the Apple Creek Snowriders 26 years ago as a charter member, said all but a few snowmobile deaths this year involved snowmobiles being operated off marked trails.

Van Handel said he feels the connection between alcohol consumption and snowmobiling is blown out

were legally drunk meaning they had a blood alcohol level of at least 10%.

Thirty-one victims or 16% who were not legally drunk had at least some alcohol in their blood.

0.5) and they survived, said Gary Homuth, a snowmobile safety specialist for the DNR.

If a snowmobiler would travel at reasonable speeds and have less to drink, we would save 75% of mis-

of proportion.

"No one ever says that a golfer who was drinking died on the golf course. They might die in a traffic accident, but that (death) isn't attributed to golfing," he said. "A drunk is a drunk whether operating a boat, snowmobile or car."

Grode said some people will consume alcohol whether they are driving a boat, car or snowmobile.

"It's the choice of an individual rather than a tie-in between drinking and snowmobiling. I know some snowmobilers who never drink alcohol and some who live to drink. I know ice fishermen who love to take their kids out, while the next guy will take a case of beer on the ice and never even take his tips ups out," Grode said.

Van Handel said one death is too many deaths in any sport.

Van Handel said one group of about a dozen snowmobile enthu-

sias in his club travel an average of 1,500 miles a year and have never had a serious accident."

Van Handel said his club has state-certified instructors, teach youth and adult snowmobility, but despite the best teaching methods, not everyone will adhere to safe operating practices.

■ The Associated Press contributed to this report.

that is overpowering the snowmobile industry. That's not it," Saari said.

There are 190,000 snowmobiles registered in Wisconsin plus thousands more from Illinois and Michigan that come to play in Wisconsin.

Door County Advocate

OFFICIAL PAPER—DOOR COUNTY, STURGEON BAY
PHONE (920) 743-3321 FAX (920) 743-5817 NEWS FAX (920) 743-8908

Established 1862 — Published Every Tuesday and Friday
at Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin 54235-0130 — Issn: 0749-7180

2003 DOOR COUNTY PUBLISHING CO., INC.

Entered at the post office in Sturgeon Bay, WI, as periodical matter
OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

FRANK A. WOOD	Publisher
CHRIS WOOD	Co-Publisher
GLENN A. REICHARD	General Manager
WARREN BLUHM	Editor
JOE KNAAPEN	News Editor
JAMES H. PETERSEN	Sales Manager
BOB LAVIOLETTE	Plant Manager
TERRIE HAEN	Business Manager
THOMAS J. ANSCHUTZ	Circulation Manager

Guest editorial DCA 3/14/3

He was just like you

I am not a writer. In fact, this is the first time I've written anything since college. I am, however, a snowmobiler.

My friends and I are probably just like you. We are all in our late 20s or early 30s and single white males. We have pretty good jobs; some own their houses, others rent. We hunt and fish, watch football and NASCAR, go to bars and church festivals. We have problems with women, like fast cars and Schwarzenegger movies. We think we can dance, but look like Frankenstein having a seizure when a girl drags us onto the floor. We could probably switch places with any of you and fit right into your group.

We have owned sleds from all manufacturers over the years. Our first sleds were junkpiles and we still make fun of them. We work on our own sleds and help each other with theirs. We watch the weather forecasts waiting for snow and read all of the snowmobiling magazines drooling over the new sleds. We put 600 miles on the truck to put 200 on the sled. We have all entered corners too fast, and all missed turns at night at one time or another. We laughed at slow rides that putted along at 15 mph. We rode with the feeling of invincibility that only youth can bring.

Our youth ended Feb. 14, 2003.

In a small town about 10 miles south of Crandon, at 11 p.m., my friend, Jim Smolen, lost his life. He was only 28. He died within a half-mile of the cabin, within a half-hour of unloading the sleds off the trailer. The reconstruction showed that he hit a stump under the snow, was thrown off and hit a tree. At least he didn't suffer.

Excessive speed was believed to have been involved, even though the sled wasn't wrecked. It looked like he just stepped off of it. He did have one or two beers, but I must say that I have seen people drink much more — I'm not condoning it, but I know you have, too.

Jim was riding as long as I can remember, 5-plus years at least, riding the same sled he had for three years. We have all seen the articles in the papers that give little detail, letting us assume it was an inexperienced rider, totally drunk, on a brand new, huge displacement sled.

What the newspaper articles did not show is how it affects everyone else. They don't show the indescribable horror of seeing a close friend lying in the snow bleeding from the eyes, ears, nose and mouth. They don't show the blank stare in his unblinking eyes as you try to remember the CPR you learned in high school. They don't show the panic felt during the longest half-mile you will ever ride back to the cabin to call 911.

They don't show the feeling of helplessness as you spend the longest half-hour of your life waiting for an ambulance. They don't tell about men who haven't prayed in years dropping to their knees and saying a prayer. They don't show the feeling of uneasiness as you drive his truck to the hospital.

They don't show the cold you feel as you wait until 4:30 a.m., when the doctors give you the news you already knew but still can't bring yourself to hear. They don't tell the flood of emotions you feel as you have to call your friend's parents in the middle of the night to tell them that their son has died. They don't mention that none of his friends will get any sleep for days. They don't mention the nightmares when they do.

They don't tell about the Department of Natural Resources showing up at 8 a.m. the next day to fill out paperwork and make them relive it all again. They don't tell about grown men breaking down and crying. They don't tell about the longest, quietest drive home ever.

His roommate is the one who found him, called his parents, and drove his truck home. He has closed the kitchen window blinds so he doesn't have to see his truck. He had to close the kitchen cabinet to keep from seeing his box of corn flakes. He is now afraid of the dark. Our season is over.

The human body is so frail, so easily damaged. If you have an accident in a big city, help is only about five minutes away. If you have an accident in the north woods help could be 40 miles away or more. Think about it: That's like having an accident in Milwaukee and having to wait for an ambulance from Illinois. And then having to go to a hospital back in Illinois.

I am not asking for speed limits, or other restrictions. Just please, please be careful. Slow down just a little. Skip that beer and have a soda instead. Ask yourself if it is worth the consequences to go flying through the woods. Your friends will wait for you. Death is forever. Think of all the good times you would miss. Take a little time and look at the beauty of nature. There are those that no longer can.

We laid Jim to rest today. If only one person is affected by this pointless loss, and a single life is saved, Jim's death would have meaning and all of us could have some closure.

I know you think that this only happens to "the other guy." So did we. Just like you.

JUSTIN, DAN, JOE, JIM G., RANDY AND CRAIG

Drunken snowmobilers targeted

This winter, Wisconsin snowmobilers will find increased enforcement efforts and higher penalties for those convicted of operating a snowmobile while intoxicated.

Department of Natural Resources Snowmobile Safety program coordinator Gary Homuth explained that the Wisconsin Legislature approved the changes this year after a series of fatal, alcohol-related snowmobiling accidents.

"We've historically talked about drunken snowmobilers as 'a dying breed.' Last year was one of the worst years we've seen in terms of alcohol related fatal accidents," Homuth said. "Fortunately, we're talking about a small minority of people who'll actually go out, get drunk, and take off on a snowmobile."

Last year's snowmobile fatality figures fell just one short of the state record, Homuth said. Of 29 fatal snowmobile accident victims, 60 percent had blood alcohol levels above .10 percent, the legal limit. Seventy percent of those killed had measurable amounts of alcohol in their systems.

Measures approved in the state budget

bill this year dedicated additional funds toward snowmobiling enforcement efforts and significantly increased the penalty for snowmobiling while intoxicated. Funds to pay for Conservation Warden, and county law enforcement patrols and equipment were boosted from \$125,000 to \$200,000. The penalty for intoxicated use of a snowmobile was raised from \$333 to \$513.

Homuth said additional legislation has been proposed that would require emergency medical personnel to report all snowmobiling injuries that appear to be associated with excessive use of alcohol. Another would allow authorities to confiscate snowmobiles that are involved in alcohol related accidents or are used to flee from law enforcement officials.

Miller Brewing drafts responsibility campaign

Miller Brewing Company has joined with Arctic Cat, Polaris, Ski-Doo and Yamaha, to develop an international snowmobile program addressing safe and responsible snowmobiling.

The responsibility program will be an awareness and education campaign organized in the interest of promoting responsible alcohol use and safe snowmobiling. There are an estimated 10 million snowmobile enthusiasts throughout the United States and Canada.

"All the manufacturers in our industry are very interested in keeping our sport safe as well as fun," said Roy Muth, President of the International Snowmobile Industry Association. "We recognize that safe snowmobiling goes beyond safe equipment to responsible behavior on the trails."

"Looking at snowmobiling from our vantage point, Miller Brewing Company has a vested interest in promoting responsible alcohol use," Yvonne Lumsden-Dill, Miller Brewing's manager of alcohol and consumer issues said of Miller's participation.

"We are 10,000 employees with fami-

lies who have identical concerns as those in alcohol advocacy groups. We are interested in avoiding misuse of our product. We especially embrace and applaud the concern of our key partners in this responsible effort," she said.

Muth pointed out that "both the manufacturers and Miller share the belief that private-public partnerships are critical to the success of a program like this and the involvement of government agencies in the snowbelt will be sought."

The Responsible Snowmobiling Program is a multi-year effort directed at 30 states and all 10 Canadian provinces.

Dreams

continued from page 29

mobiler's body to merge with the optical nerve and the snowmobiler gets a shitty outlook on life.

The symptoms usually disappear with a couple of aspirins and a good nights sleep, or a toddy for the body after the days riding is completed. To eliminate this condition watch the weather or make a phone call to the area you are planning to ride in. The ice cube effect works.

AFFORDABLE LUXURY!

We offer: Indoor Pool, Whirlpool, Sauna, Game Room and Deluxe/Jacuzzi Suites. All three locations on snowmobile trails!



American Budget Inn
Hurley, Eagle River, Black River Falls
Call 1-800-356-8018 for information
or reservations.



2
FOR THE
PRICE OF
1

STAY IN ANY RICE LAKE MOTEL

2 for the price of 1

(2 people for the price of one)

Nov. 15th, 1992 thru April 30th, 1993

Just mention that you saw this ad.

Please call ahead for accommodations

Make some memories this winter in beautiful Rice Lake, Wisconsin. The gateway to the Tuscobia State Snowmobile Trail.

1-800-523-6317 Ext. 188

For Rice Lake Tourism Information
and Motel Accommodations

December 1992

Executive secretary — Dick Killian

Irresponsible snowmobilers will pay

* During the AWSC Fall Workshop General Session Ralph Christiansen, Director D.N.R. Bureau of Enforcement emphasized that snowmobile enforcement is going to be a priority item for D.N.R. wardens this winter. Later in the day during a workshop program Gary Homuth, D.N.R. Recreational Vehicle Officer warned the attending crowd that O.W.I. operation of a snowmobile is a major contributing factor in increased accidents and deaths. The snowmobiling public had better heed these warnings or suffer the consequences.

During the past snowmobile season the news media had plenty reason for the bashing they gave to snowmobiling although they did overlook many of the contributing factors that were obvious. The snowmobiling public for the most part are equally upset with reckless snowmobile operation and are demand-



ing changes. The legislators too looked for ways to curb the problem.

Working together the AWSC, Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council, D.N.R. and legislators put forth additional incentives that could greatly im-

prove Wisconsin's snowmobile trail safety. Added enforcement and stiffer penalties should discourage unsafe operation. More available dollars for trail maintenance will be an incentive for additional grooming and signing.

Clubs qualifying for supplemental maintenance have been busy widening trails and improving dangerous corners. Extensive advertising of responsible alcohol consumption coupled with safety messages is expected to produce favorable results. We have often talked and wrote about these problems and needed changes.

Finally, we feel the time has come when all of these efforts will become a reality. Working together we can then convince the news media that there are positive changes worth noting and Wisconsin's trails are again a safe place to enjoy family snowmobiling.

* Editor

continued from page 5

mended those who made the effort to take part in the workshop for their enthusiasm and dedication for improving the sport of snowmobiling.

Scott Makowski, president of the Waukesha County Association, also thanked those who came and said Waukesha County was proud to have hosted the annual Fall Workshop the past eight years, and added, "We would like to have you come back."

Numbers was the primary topic of Harold Butschke, AWSC executive director and membership chairman, who said there are new clubs who will be joining AWSC this season. Businesslike cards were passed out promoting the AWSC inscribed with a simple message saying the best way to get someone to join a club -- You Ask Them.

* Operating While Intoxicated is the No. 1 problem associated with snowmobilers, said Ralph Christiansen, director for the DNR Bureau of Enforcement. Christiansen said last year 192 snowmobilers were arrested for OWI, and of the near-record of snowmobilers killed last winter, the ma-

jority were driving drunk.

Christiansen said more law enforcement officials will be out on the trails this season and reminded the audience of the increase in cost for the first OWI offense, rising from \$330 to \$573. Christiansen thanked snowmobilers for being pro-active and responsible, but also issued a warning regarding their image which he said is being ruined by the few who are irresponsible.

Christiansen said he believes the problem of drinking and driving will get better, and said, "Together we will make a difference."

Alcohol abuse was also part of Dale Vagts' speech. Vagts, an active snowmobiler and owner of V&V Insurance Agency, said the biggest negative the sport of snowmobiling has is alcohol. He commended the AWSC for their lobbying efforts in drawing awareness to the alcohol problem and supporting stiffer OWI penalties.

Vagts said 80 percent of the insurance claims he handles, relating to snowmobile damage, are alcohol related.

Statz and Executive Secretary Dick

Killian commented on the success of last summer's International Snowmobile Congress. Over 600 people attended and the final figure showed a \$10,000 profit of which \$3,000 will be used for seed money for next year's ISC at Nova Scotia. Statz thanked the four snowmobile manufacturers for their "great support," and the many businesses who also contributed.

With another workshop completed all we can do now is what Ralph Christiansen jokingly said about snowmobilers -- 'a group which actively wishes for bad weather.'

Happy holidays and best wishes for 'bad weather.'



"Michigan's Best Kept Secret"

★ Warm, Friendly Hospitality

★ 500+ miles groomed snowmobile trails

★ 150+ groomed cross country trails

★ Excellent accommodations

BIG SNOW COUNTRY

Averaging over 175"/yr.

For more information call

Chamber of Commerce

906-884-4735

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____

Mail to: Ontonagon County Chamber of Commerce
WS92 P.O. Box 266, Ontonagon, MI 49953

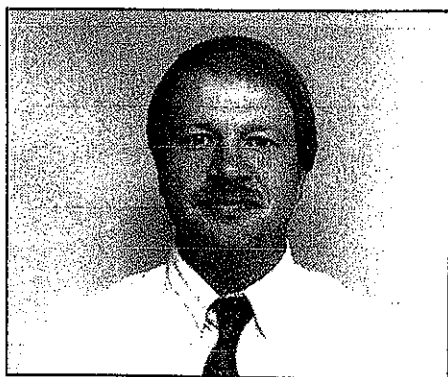


Image needs to be polished

by Karl Raymond

As this issue of the magazine reaches you, the '93 Snowmobile Shows in the Midwest are history; the trees are free of leaves; the firewood is cut, split and hauled indoors; the furnace kicks in on a regular basis; more blankets are on the bed; the list of outdoor autumn projects is dwindling; and darkness sets in before the journey home from work.

Contrary to what the calendar indicates, Halloween has always been my dividing point between the conclusion of autumn and the beginning of winter. For some, the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs' annual Workshop weekend marks the welcoming of winter. Clearly, winter is fast approaching, at least we as snowmobilers hope it is.

Since this column is being written prior to the AWSC Workshop, I can only speculate what the governing body of snowmobilers will be discussing at the general sessions, the various workshops and the directors' meeting.

OWI arrest procedures and penalties and safety were part of the agenda. In the wake of nearly 30 snowmobile deaths last season in Wisconsin it's

continued on page 9

NORTHWINDS MOTEL & RESORT

Located On The North End of Lake Gogebic

CATERING TO SNOWMOBILERS & ICE FISHERMEN
SNOWMOBILE TRAIL AT YOUR DOOR

18 Units On Lake Gogebic
Rec Room • Fireplace Units

CALL FOR THE LATEST TRAIL INFORMATION

(906) 575-3557

VISA, MASTERCARD, AM EXPRESS
& DISCOVER CARD

1 Mile W. of Bergland on M-28
P.O. Box 249, Bergland, MI 49810



November 1992 Wis Snowmobile News

Guest editorial

Joe just another number

by Kent Lester
Managing Editor SUPERTRAX
International Magazine

The chills are tracing a pattern up and down my spine as the officer reads the police report to me. A snowmobiler has become a statistic, and this time, it happened a little too close to home. I'm feeling uncomfortable.

Using sterile words like "occurrence," "incident" and "deceased" to explain the pointless snuffing out of a human life makes me squirm in my seat, but I keep listening to what the lawman has to say. I support it's partly because of my own morbid curiosity but mostly, my human tendency is to hope that some mistake has been made and by identifying it the whole incident will change the past so it never really happened. Sort of like pushing the reset button on a Nintendo.

It soon becomes clear, however, that no amount of re-telling will change the fact that a snowmobiler is dead and a widow is alone and two kids will have their lives altered irrevocably, forever. In time the "occurrence" will be forgot-

ten, the "deceased" replaced and the "incident" relegated to the back pages of some record book on one of the dusty shelves of our memory banks.

"Subject was travelling at an estimated speed of 70 miles per hour when impact occurred."

There's a bad joke told of how "it's never the speed that kills you... just the sudden stop." I'm trying not to think about this as the facts are being read. The media will have a ball with this story. They'll make it sound like it was another one of "those" snowmobilers travelling at a ridiculous speed on one of those over-powered "unsafe machines." They'll have their say and no one will stand up to refute it. The sport's reputation will take another sucker punch.

I've gone fast there, too. I know he couldn't have been out of control. There must be another explanation.

"Time of occurrence: approximately 12:40 a.m. Visibility estimated at 30 to 50 feet with heavy snowfall and high winds."

continued on page 20



BEST WESTERN of Munising MOTEL & RESTAURANT

Located on M-28, 3 Miles East of Munising



- Executive King Suites
- Sauna
- Whirlpool
- Indoor Pool
- Color Cable TV
- Movie Channels
- Direct Dial Phones
- Full Service Restaurant
- Cocktails
- Gas & Oil on Premises
- Indoor Repair Facility
- Refrigerators & Microwave
- Ovens Available in Some Rooms

**FREE
FULL BREAKFAST**

*Choose from our
special menu!*

Limit 4 Breakfasts
Per Room

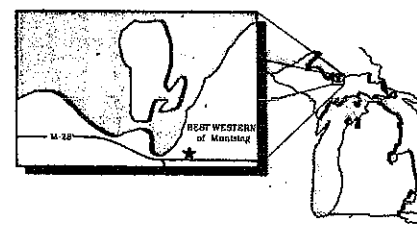
- * In the heart of Superior snow country with more than 200 inches of snowfall per year.
- * Ride more than 250 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and hundreds of miles of unplowed forest roads.

- * See: Pictured Rocks Lakeshore
- * Grand Sable Dunes
- * Grand Island
- * Frozen waterfalls
- * Virgin forests

The trails start at our front door!

(906) 387-4864

Write: P.O. Box 310, Munising, MI 49862



❄️ Just Joe

continued from page 5

It was a snow storm! Why was he going so fast in a blizzard? Surely no one in their right mind would ride a snowmobile that fast at night, in those conditions.

"After retrieval of subject's snowmobile, six empty beer cans were found in vehicle's trunk compartment. Autopsy report reveals that subject's blood alcohol level was 0.18.

So that was it. Nerve endings that wouldn't respond quite fast enough... just a millisecond too slow. The senses just a tiny bit fogged at the most critical moment of his life. Just a split-instant of hesitation in judgment making the difference between a living, breathing, thinking human being with hopes and dreams and a future and... a corpse.

Some people will say we shouldn't

talk about this. That it could hurt the sport to talk about snowmobilers who drink and ride. We disagree.

There have been too many long, arduous hours of work put into this sport by volunteers whose efforts have been paid for with blood, sweat and tears to let our image be destroyed by those who choose to act irresponsibly. You see, snowmobiling is more than just a sport or a recreation. Snowmobiling requires that someone has to be strongly committed to ensure that its participants will have a place to ride. And as participants, there's a very fragile line separating the image that we are mature, responsible people and, that one that the observing public would love to believe, that we are a bunch of crazed idiots.

Every time there's a fatality, injury or accident where excessive alcohol is involved it cruches not only the people who are directly involved in the tragedy, but every person who loves snowmobiling and is willing to put the work into giving it a future.

Want to really impress your friends

this year? It won't be with stories of your superior riding skills or the performance of your '93 Snow Bullet. Here's how. At your favorite pitstop, when you know you've had enough to drink... and believe me, you'll know, just say: "NO MORE." They'll be impressed.

And your chances of being another number will be greatly decreased.

Seeking your help

The Calendar of Events contains a large assortment of activities throughout the state, many falling on the same dates.

With your help we would like to cover your event, especially winter fests and races. Please send us action photos (no posed photos please) and a write-up following your event which might be published in the following month's magazine or used the following season as a promotional article.

We also encourage sending in color slides for possible front cover consideration.

HURLEY, Wisconsin - Where Your Winter Fun Begins!!!

Voted #1 NIGHTLIFE

*Hurley Area
Chamber of Commerce*



Highway 51 South • Hurley, WI 54534
For More Information call: 715-561-4334

Holiday Inn of Hurley
SNOWMOBILERS RATE

Sunday Thru Thursday Nights
Single or Double Occupancy - \$39.00

Friday and Saturday Nights
Single or Double Occupancy - \$49.00
Special Rates Not Valid
12/25 - 1/3 and 2/12, 13, 14

- 100 deluxe guest rooms
- Harold's for great food
- Nate's Place for cocktails
- Cozy lobby fireplace
- INDOOR RECREATION CENTER with indoor pool, whirlpool, saunas, exercise equipment

U.S. 2 and 51
Hurley, WI 54534 (715) 561-3030

Star-Lite

Good Food, Drink & Reasonable Rates
Hwy 51 S. Hurley
715-561-3085 - 715-561-4946
Butch & Cathy Brown



Welcome Snowmobilers
**Fontecchio's
Bell Chalet**
Specializing In American and Italian Cuisine

Lunch 11-2pm - Mon-Thurs.
OPEN AT 5:00 - 7 - days - Hurley, WI

ISLAND LAKE INN

KEN & ANDY OTTE
• Full Bar • Premium Gas - Oil
715-476-2384
Winter: Open 10:00 Daily

WINDJAMMER

Restaurant & Lounge
On Iron Horse Trail
HURLEY, WI 715-561-5458
Snowmobile Guide Service Available

#1 Hot Spot on Pine Lake
YUKON INN

HWY 51
9 MILES NORTH OF MERCER
• PREMIUM UNLEADED GAS
• FULL BAR • FIREPLACE
• PIZZA • ELECTRONIC GAMES
• CHILI • HOT SANDWICHES
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
Hosts: Rick & Patti Christianson
PHONE 476-2204

**AMERICAN
BUDGET
INN**

(715) 561-3500

THINK SNOW!
Our Vacation Season Never Ends
**HAVEN NORTH
CONDOMINIUMS**

HURLEY, WIS.

- TRAILSIDE ACCOMMODATIONS
- WOODBURNING FIREPLACE
- COMPLETELY FURNISHED KITCHENS

Call Now For Reservations
715-561-5626

IRON HORSE INN

Live Music Fri & Sat
Located on Iron Horse Trail
Hurley, WI 561-3196

Town & Country

Liquor & Gas
On The Snowmobile Trails.
Hwy. 51
Largest selection of beer, wine, liquor in area.

**Eagle Bluff Condominium
Rentals**



990-10th Avenue North
Hurley, WI 54534
1-800-336-0973

**** 450 Miles of Groomed Trails ****
50 Miles of Express Riding on the famous "IRON HORSE TRAIL"
24 HOUR SNOW CONDITIONS 1-715-561-FUNN (3866)

This letter was sent to Snowmobilers Against Drunk Riders and is related to the "Painful Facts....the Ultimate Price Paid" letter.

Dear Sir:

My husband died due to injuries sustained in a snowmobile crash during the 2005-2006 snowmobile season. He was 46 years old. He was a loving husband to me and a loving father to our two daughters who are 17 and 25. He was a wonderful grandfather to his two grandchildren who are 3 and 5. He was looked up to by all of the children at the school where he worked. He loved the outdoors and enjoyed many activities that our state has to offer. Unfortunately alcohol was a part of most all of these pass-times, not just snowmobiling. And he was not alone. There is a whole culture of people who think that drinking and having a good time go hand in hand. It will be very difficult for you to shake this mentality from the riders of Wisconsin. The worst thing is that it's getting passed on down to the children of these riders. I was not a rider, but both of our daughters love it. When their dad was out on the trails with them, he drove responsibly. When he was without them he drank. It's common for these riders to go from bar to bar having several drinks at each stop. My girls have both seen it first hand and so have I. It's a problem not just for those who drink, but also for those who don't. Add speed and night riding to it and you have the worst possible combination. They call these situations accidents. I'm not so sure. An accident is when something happens that's beyond your control. You have the ability not to drink, so I'm not sure how it can be considered an accident.

He leaves behind a daughter that won't have her dad with her when she graduates high school this spring, goes to college this fall, walks down the aisle and has children. He leaves behind a daughter that won't have her dad with her when she needs him. He leaves behind two grandchildren who will only remember him from photographs because they were so young when he died. He leaves behind a wife who won't have him around for all the things that she took for granted all these years. He leaves behind friends who will miss his great sense of humor and the fact that you could count on him for any favor. He leaves behind a school full of children that will miss his easy smile and friendly demeanor. He leaves behind a life not fully lived and the all the unknown possibilities that went with it.

My deepest wish is that your organization will make a difference. Even if only one person heeds your warning all your efforts will be worth it for their family. I wish it wasn't too late for ours.

Sincerely,

Name Withheld